天地無用! in LOVE

夢の家

ねぎしひろし

イラスト　堀内博之

富士見ファンタジア文庫

Tenchi Muyo! in LOVE
House of Dreams
by
Hiroshi Negishi

Machine Translated and Edited by
Eff_Efferson
(June 2026)

tenchimuyotranslationblog.blogspot.com

Prologue

The snow continued to fall silently, as if every sound in the world had frozen over. From the black, snow-cloud-covered sky, the white incarnations fell endlessly, attempting to dye everything on the earth a pure white.

Suddenly, the taut air trembled, and a faint voice could be heard from somewhere. As she strained to listen, it sounded like a small boy.

"Ahahaha, ufuufu, hahahaha..."

Gradually, the voice became clearly audible. Looking closely, it was the grounds of a shrine she recognized. A small boy was playing alone, holding his hands up to the sky, trying to catch the falling snow with his small hands.

I wonder whose child that is...

She stared intently, but his face was blurred and she could not see it. The moment she reflexively tried to run over to him... the snow, which had been falling quietly, suddenly swirled violently. She could no longer see an inch in front of her.

As she peered through the confusion, the surroundings gradually became clear. It seemed the same boy was standing in the same place. However, something about him was different. Just a moment ago, he was playing so happily...

"Uhh, uhh, uhh..."

Was it a deep, uncontrollable sadness that he was desperately trying to endure? Sobs leaked out incessantly. Driven by an inexplicable heartache, she tried to approach him once more. But she could not get any closer... She tried to call out, but no voice came.

The boy was muttering something while crying.

"○○○○○!"

She could not hear those words clearly. However, her heart was shaken violently. Something exploded inside her.

Who are you? What are you trying to say?

The words she screamed in her heart did not turn into a voice. The next moment, various memories flashed, then vanished in an instant.

Thin light leaking through the gap in the white lace curtains told her that it was still early in the morning. Her hazy consciousness began to wake up little by little. She felt relieved that the scenery emerging from the darkness of sleep was the ceiling of her familiar room.

She lifted her head slightly.

"...That dream again... What on earth could it be..."

She glanced at her desk and saw her classical literature notebook, left open from when she was working on it the night before. Posters for the World Expo and the currently trending popular folk group were plastered on the wall. A tennis racket was placed carelessly on the floor. Everywhere she looked, it promised the start of an ordinary day where nothing would happen.

But her chest ached too much to simply brush off the dream she had just had. That scene she had seen somewhere. A memory she absolutely could not recall. Trying to suppress the feeling of irritation, she took a deep breath. Then, she noticed the tear tracks on her cheeks.

What was it that these tears were trying to tell her?

"Who on earth was that child..."

No matter how much she analyzed the dream she had been seeing repeatedly for the past few days, she simply could not understand it. Perhaps it would be better not to trace back a sad feeling that did not exist in her memory.
Self-deprecatingly calling herself a sensitive girl, she stretched out wide once more.

"It’s a bit early, but I guess I'll go prepare breakfast!"

Lifting her slender legs into the air, the girl jumped out of the futon using the momentum as she brought them back down.

Achika Masaki, 17 years old. A high school girl in the prime of her youth, at an age where even flowers would feel bashful. Living such an ordinary and peaceful life, the girl had no way of knowing at that moment the intense prank of fate that was awaiting her.

The season was gradually beginning to show signs of spring.

Chapter 1:

The World in the Year 1970

It was spring. As if to embody the proverb, "In spring, one sleeps at dawn without knowing," a peaceful yawn echoed through the air.

It was already midday. A man walked toward a house.

"Phew!"

He let out another large yawn, rolled his neck two or three times, and shrugged his shoulders up and down. Walking with a steady crunch of gravel, he arrived in front of the house and did an about-face turn. He placed his hands on his hips, arched his back, and gave a broad smile. For his apparent age, he was quite flexible.

The familiar house was reflected upside down in his view. It was a traditional Japanese wooden structure; the gate and the ogawara roof tiles told the story of a house that had once been quite grand, but it was, unfortunately, old. While it seemed that maintenance had not been neglected, there was a lack of human presence compared to the size of the house, and a lonely, tranquil atmosphere drifted about it.

The man entered the house in silence. He was the chief priest of the shrine located on the same grounds, and it appeared he had returned home to have lunch.

"Man, that won't do. I fell asleep and almost missed lunch. I guess I'm getting old," he muttered to himself.

There was no sign of anyone in the house, and no sounds of cooking in the kitchen. The man entered the kitchen and opened the lid of the rice tub on the table, which was covered by a cloth. The silver-white rice he had cooked that morning shone brightly. Next, he opened the refrigerator and found some appetizing leftover simmered dishes and pickles from the night before.

It was enough for one man to have a light lunch, but he seemed to have had a sudden idea. He closed the refrigerator, opened a sliding cupboard above the sink, took something out, and squinted with a grin. The styrofoam cup he had taken out bore the words "Cup Noodle." He had a weakness for trendy things.

The man’s name was Katsuhito Masaki. Yes, he was the "Tenchi’s Grandpa" we all knew. Katsuhito filled a kettle vigorously with water, placed it on the stove, and twisted the knob with determination.

Suddenly breaking the silence, boisterous voices drifted in from outside the front door, which had remained slightly ajar. In front of the house, the incredibly irresponsible—no, excuse me—the wonderful people were arguing over incredibly irresponsible opinions. As you might expect, it was the aliens, the monster-woman, and the Galaxy Police detectives.

"What is this? This filthy, falling-apart shack? You’ve got to be kidding me! Why does the greatest pirate in the universe have to stay in such a scummy house?"

The woman who unleashed this insult—likely the most severe evaluation this house had ever received—was Ryoko. She was a former space pirate, a woman of monstrous strength, and on top of that, a freak who could walk through walls and travel through space before breakfast. She was also a self-proclaimed "best woman in the universe" who flaunted her dazzlingly nice body and made passes at Tenchi at every opportunity.

"My, what vulgar language. Besides, to think this is 26 years ago—the backwater planet of Earth is even more rustic, isn't it?"

While rebuking Ryoko’s rude remarks about the house as vulgar, this woman, who criticized the Earth in general, was Ayeka. Even in the vast universe, she was the First Princess of the Jurai Royal Family, who must have been at the cutting edge of civilization—no, that was a lie; she was a genuine, authentic princess. Perhaps that was a bit long-winded.

"Hey, who's the one being vulgar here?"

Sparks flew instantly. This type of exchange between Ryoko and Ayeka had long since become routine, and they were so well-synchronized that their timing was almost artistic. The others were mostly fed up with it, but the two of them seemed to be enjoying it quite a bit, without caring at all.

"Big sisters, it’s bad to say things like that. This is the house where Tenchi-nii-chan was born. It’s kind of like a secluded bed and breakfast; isn't that nice?"

The young girl who rebuked the aforementioned two and knocked down the house’s pride with her innocent remark was Sasami. She was Ayeka's younger sister and the Second Princess of the planet Jurai.

"Hey, hey, doesn't this place look like the area around Tenchi-san’s house?"

"That’s obvious! This is the front of Tenchi-san’s house 26 years ago!"

"Eh? Why did we come to a place like this? We have to guard the Earth in 1996—no, I don't want to!"

"That’s why, as I explained many times, Tenchi-san’s mother is... Oh, never mind. I'll explain it slowly later."

The two women carrying out this comedy routine were Mihoshi and her partner, Kiyone. Despite how they looked, both were ace detectives of the Galaxy Police. Or so they themselves thought. Their top-tier, cosmic-level "idiot" and "serious guy" act were worthy of a Galactic Comedy Award, and they were "dangerous detectives" who always performed exactly as one would expect from a scatterbrained duo. As for which was Mihoshi's remark and which was Kiyone's, it was self-evident to the wise reader, so I will forgo the explanation.

And one more person. No, one more creature.

"Meow, meow, meow~"

She was Ryo-Ohki. She looked like an animal with cute, long ears, but her true form was Ryoko’s spaceship. She loved carrots.

And, and, we must not forget the protagonist, Tenchi Masaki. It wasn't that he had been forgotten, but for some reason, he was a bit overshadowed this time. The reason for that would eventually be revealed.

Thus, after finishing their arguments, Ryoko and Ayeka pressed the front door chime. It goes without saying that there was another squabble over who would press it.

"Ouch! You, you pressed it on my finger on purpose!"

"My, I was trying to press it, but Ryoko-san’s finger got in the way, didn't it?"

"I’m going to lose my head over this pedantic woman!"

"My, if you lose your head even more, it will be truly hopeless."

"You! I'm going to zip that mouth of yours shut!"

"Both of you, cut it out!"

Tenchi rebuked them and then hid in the shadows with the other three, plus one.

"Ding-dong!"

Katsuhito, who was sipping his final spoonful of soup while contemplating why Cup Noodles used a transparent plastic fork instead of chopsticks, frowned when he heard the chime. His profile, as if he were staring at a bitter memory from far away, did not look like that of a mere priest; however, he looked enough like an old man angry at being disturbed while eating something delicious.

Katsuhito reluctantly stood up and went to the entrance.

"Who is it?"

The moment he opened the door while asking, *Pshhh!!* Ayeka sprayed something suspicious (which looked like cockroach spray) at Katsuhito. However, nothing happened on the surface.

(Oh, a disappointment?)

When Katsuhito opened the door, two beautiful girls around the age of a high school student were standing there. One had a modern, slightly rebellious look, but she had surprisingly pure and beautiful eyes. Perhaps I praised her too much? The other had a purely Japanese appearance, looking very much like a young lady from a good family.

"Um, we were introduced by our school teacher and came here..." the Japanese-looking one opened her mouth.

"By a teacher?"

"Yes."

"Anyway, it’s not right to talk on the doorstep, so please come in."

"Thank you."

"By the way, have you had lunch? If not, would you like to join me?"

The two were used to sudden events, but they were momentarily taken aback by his words, which were impactful despite lacking context. They could not have known Katsuhito's psychological state at that time, but they nodded instinctively. Or rather, they were truly hungry.

Katsuhito, Ayeka, and Ryoko sat in the Masaki family's living room. In front of the three of them were Cup Noodles and transparent plastic forks, waiting for the three minutes after hot water had been poured in.

"Well then, an army marches on its stomach, and you can’t talk on an empty one. Let’s hear your story while we eat. I just happened to be looking for someone to eat with."

Katsuhito was in a good mood, having found an excuse to eat a second cup. He seemed to have become hooked on this new flavor.

"Thank you. If I may introduce myself, I am Ayeka. The one next to me is my cousin, Ryoko. Though it is not for me, her cousin, to say, she is quite the reckless delinquent, and her parents finally gave up on her, so my merciful parents took her in..."

"Hey, what did you just say? Grandpa, listen to me. This girl’s family were nouveau riche, but their various vices were exposed and the family fell apart! My parents felt sorry for them and..."

"What did you say!!?"

Just as it seemed their argument would develop into a scuffle, Katsuhito said with a grave, calm tone:

"That is a complicated situation. Well, eat before the noodles get soggy."

Then, he opened the lid of his own Cup Noodle and slurped the noodles with his fork. Thrown off by Katsuhito’s quiet tone, the two also opened their respective Cup Noodle lids and slurped their noodles...

Fu, fu, slurrrp, slurrrp, slurp.

...A peaceful moment passed.

"I understand. I will accept your request for lodging."

Suddenly, Katsuhito broke the peace again in a calm tone. Even though there was no "crackling" sound.

"Eh? Um... we haven't..."

Katsuhito said to the bewildered Ayeka with a smile:

"Actually, I just received a call from the teacher earlier. They said two transfer students were having trouble with their long commute. They are in the same class as my daughter, Achika, apparently. Achika is an only child, so she will be happy that you have come."

"But, that can't be..."

Pushing aside the still-bewildered Ayeka, Ryoko said:

"What. If you knew, why didn't you say so sooner? Grandpa, you have a bad personality."

Hahaha, the somehow hollow laughter of the three echoed in the living room. All three of them thought almost simultaneously that an awkward atmosphere was exactly what this was.

"Well then, I'm going back to the shrine, so please make yourselves at home as if this were your own house."

With that, Katsuhito quickly disappeared to the shrine. Ayeka saw him off with a smile, but as soon as Katsuhito was out of sight, she turned to Ryoko.

"This is strange. To think that I received a call from the school... I wonder if this 'Temporary Partial Memory Removal Spray' that Washu-san gave us is really working."

However, the carefree Ryoko didn't take it seriously at all.

"Who cares? Either way is fine. The goal is to board in this house. Besides, maybe Washu meddled with the school. More importantly, let's go look around the house."

"My, how shameless..."

Ryoko walked out into the hallway without waiting for Ayeka's words, as if to say it was troublesome.

"I told you to stop..."

Following Ryoko, Ayeka also entered the depths of the house. Deep down, she was full of curiosity.

The room across from the living room was the kitchen. Ryoko opened the refrigerator and whistled.

"Phew, that looks like a tasty simmered dish."

She pinched one and put it in her mouth. "Delicious!"

"My, stop that. It's unsightly. Your upbringing is showing!!"

Ryoko threw a piece of the simmered food into Ayeka's mouth as she shouted with her mouth wide open.

"My, w-what... *chew, chew*... Oh, it’s delicious. It tastes like Sasami’s seasoning."

"Right? Grandpa told us to treat it like our own house, so don't be so stiff."

"Well, I suppose that’s true..."

Perhaps they weren't satisfied with just the Cup Noodles, as they shamefully finished off the simmered dish. Next, they entered the room next to the living room. The room, which was neatly organized, seemed to be Katsuhito’s.

"What, it doesn't look any different from now."

"My, this is..."

What Ayeka picked up was an album. Every page was filled with photos of Katsuhito in his youth and his wife. A beautiful woman who was constantly smiling, bright and carefree in her shrine maiden attire. The woman Katsuhito loved on Earth. And between the two of them, an irreplaceable daughter was born. And that was, of course, directly linked to Tenchi’s birth.

"In this case, it’s no wonder he couldn't return to Jurai," Ayeka whispered with a bittersweet smile, her eyes looking extremely gentle.

"That’s incomparable to you, isn't it?" Ryoko, who had been peeking over her shoulder, seized the opportunity to throw a barb.

"What did you say~"

She turned around with her eyes narrowed, but Ryoko was already gone. Ryoko was rampaging through the Masaki house, making full use of her specialty wall-phasing and space-teleportation, going from the guest room to the bathroom.

And the place she arrived at was the room at the very back. It seemed that only that room had been renovated; it was a modern, wooden-floored Western-style room. White lace curtains swayed at the window in front of the door. There was a bed covered with a gingham checkered spread, with the head of the bed facing the large window. On it, a Snoopy plush toy was looking at them aimlessly.

Beside the bed was a neatly arranged study desk, and white lilies were displayed in a celadon vase, looking lovely. Perhaps she had been in the middle of reading; there was a bookmark in a Chekhov paperback. And right next to it were several guidebooks for prestigious women's universities in Tokyo and local Okayama university brochures. One could glimpse the owner’s inner confusion.

Of course, it was useless to expect such observational skills from Ryoko.

By the wall with the door, there were, as expected, a white dresser, a closet, and a vanity table. Also, a tennis racket was leaning against it. Furthermore, a bookshelf was lined up neatly on one wall, and the archaeology and ancient history literature that occupied most of it made it impossible to guess the resident's age. However, it was clearly not Katsuhito’s room.

That meant... yes, this was the room of Achika, Katsuhito’s only daughter.

"Ryoko-san, Ryoko-san, where are you?"

The earlier anger was gone... While secretly looking at Katsuhito’s album, Ayeka, who had been left behind by Ryoko, also arrived at the room at the back while searching for her. Unlike the other rooms partitioned by sliding doors, the door, which had a cute knob cover, had a corkboard with "ACHIKA" written on it.

A hot sensation welled up in Ayeka’s chest. Just then:

"Gya-ha-ha-ha!!"

A shrill, boisterous laugh suddenly came from inside.

"What is that barbaric shouting? And people were finally starting to feel gentle."

When Ayeka opened the door and peeked inside, Ryoko was rolling around holding her stomach. Ryoko said while stifling her laughter:

"My, take a look at this, too."

"What is it?"

The book handed to her by Ryoko seemed to be a manga.

"Isn't this a manga? If it’s manga, Tenchi-sama’s father has plenty, so..."

"Well, just read it."

Giving in to the forceful Ryoko, Ayeka began to read the manga. The manga, which featured the face of a serious-looking girl on the cover, did not look like a funny story at all, but the overly sincere story felt like a gag to the two, no, to the two modern people.

"Can records really improve by sheer willpower, Ayeka?"

"That’s right, she didn't even know she was being bullied, and said 'Thank you, coach.' I can't believe it."

Before long, Ayeka also began to laugh until she was almost suffocating, pounding the floor. At times like this, the two truly looked like they were getting along very well.

Around that time, a girl was looking up at the long stairs leading to the Masaki house with resentment.

"Ugh. Every day, going up and down these stairs, I hate it. My legs are going to get fat."

However, she was a beautiful girl with a healthy, yet slender build. She had straight hair that reached her waist, tied loosely in the back, and she was dressed in a sailor uniform. Looking just at her features, she appeared well-behaved and adult-like, but her sharp gaze and lively manner gave her more of a cute impression than that of a beauty. While complaining, Achika, who had started climbing the stairs, suddenly felt a strong gaze and looked around quickly.

But there was no one there. Even though it was spring, it was still chilly as the sun began to set. The girl, dyed red by the setting sun, hunched her shoulders slightly. Then, after looking around once more, she tilted her head and walked quickly up the stairs, as if to shake off the gaze.

A black shadow appeared just as the girl's back vanished. The owner of the gaze was Tenchi. Although he had sent Ryoko and Ayeka to board at the Masaki house, he had been watching over them the whole time, worried about the four people and one creature.

"Got it? Tenchi-dono must avoid contact with Mother as much as possible. It's dangerous if a time paradox occurs, you know."

The words of the "greatest genius scientist in the universe, Washu-chan," who was recognized by herself and others, crossed Tenchi's mind.

"Mother... is that, truly...?"

Although the memory of his mother remained in his childhood recollections, a strange, fox-bewitched feeling and an unbearable nostalgia were intricately intertwined in Tenchi's heart as he watched the girl who looked like she was his own age. And immediately, he couldn't help but remember another fact.

"That... in the film..."

It was a word he muttered in his mouth. But it had certainly been heard that way.

"Tenchi-nii-chan, Kiyone-san and the others are saying it's almost time to go."

Sasami called out innocently, but with a hint of concern.

"Ah... yeah, you're right."

Tenchi replied to Sasami with a bright smile, looked up at the Masaki house once more, and muttered in his heart:

"Mother, I will definitely protect you."

Achika, who had finally reached her home after climbing the long stairs, was surprised by the lively laughter that could be heard even outside. Something was different from usual...

"Is there a guest...?"

But that seemed a bit too noisy. Feeling strange, she opened the front door softly. As she peered in, two pairs of unfamiliar women's shoes were lined up. No, to be precise, one of those pairs was scattered in the entryway, looking as if they had just been kicked off! The personality of the owner was completely exposed.

She put away the shoes, went up into the house, and when she opened the sliding door to the living room, a spirited "Welcome back!" was called out. She was greeted in a trio by her father Katsuhito and the two girls she didn't recognize. She looked at the faces of the three who were relaxing while sipping tea in front of the hearth, one by one, and finally found her voice.

"I-I'm home. Father, who are these people?"

"These are Ayeka-san and Ryoko-san. They will be boarding at our house starting today. Get along with them."

Next to Katsuhito, who was answering with a carefree smile, Ayeka and Ryoko also cheerfully, no, smoothly spread smiles and said, "Nice to meet you~."

"Huh? Boarding, um, Father...?"

"Well, well, don't stand there, you sit here too."

While reluctantly sitting down, she looked at the faces of her sudden new housemates once more. The one with long light-blue hair in a unique hairstyle like a rock musician waved her hand casually, like a close friend. The other, who looked like a young lady, was smiling as usual and showering her with as much amiability as she could.

"I hear that both of them are having trouble with their long-distance commute. Well, that's good, that's good."

"Father, when you say 'that’s good,' who is going to take care of them?"

"Well, you should think about that slowly later."

"Later, you say..."

"At any rate, since Mother passed away, you’ve been feeling lonely for a long time. This might cheer you up a bit."

The two women nodded in unison. Knowing from 17 years of experience that it was useless to say anything to her father at times like this, Achika reluctantly gave up. However, she didn't feel like sipping tea with the four of them, so she declined the living room gathering.

"I have to prepare dinner..."

When Achika said this and entered her room to change out of her sailor uniform, what awaited her was—oh my—a hellish sight. Every book had been pulled off the bookshelf, and there were traces that the dresser and closet had been opened. Moreover, to her horror, the album of her favorite folk group, which she had bought by saving her allowance, was covered in scratches on top of the record player.

"What is this~!!"

Katsuhito, Ryoko, and Ayeka rushed to the sound of Achika’s scream. Katsuhito called out to Achika, who was frozen in front of the door.

"Achika, what’s wrong?"

"It’s not 'what's wrong'! What is the meaning of this?"

"My, I'm sorry. Perhaps I made a bit of a mess. I was just looking at your room," Ayeka said coolly.

"A bit of a mess... Hey, why do you open the closet just to look at the room!"

"Why? Because your father told us to feel like family... I got a little worried..." Ryoko added.

"What are you worried about!"

"Well, you’re 17 years old and you're wearing these unsexy panties with panda illustrations on them..."

"Eek! What are you saying!!"

Achika shrieked, turning bright red.

"That's right. Achika-san, you must capture your father's heart and give birth to Tenchi-sama."

Ayeka also joined Ryoko.

"W-what are you saying, that doesn't make any sense!"

Achika snapped at Ayeka, but Ryoko's mischief continued.

"First of all, you have poor taste in men. What are these long-haired, flashy guys?"

Saying that, Ryoko pointed to a poster of a currently trending rock group wearing flamboyant costumes.

"What are you guys? Are you on the side of adults who say rock is for delinquents? More importantly, what are you going to do about this record!"

Achika approached Ayeka with the scratched-up record in her hand.

"T-this is Ryoko-san's fault. She said records are listened to with a needle, and then like this—*zzzt*..."

Ayeka ran the record needle wildly across the record, adding even more scratches.

"Stop it! Father, say something!!"

Finally, Achika asked Katsuhito for help, but as you know, it was futile.

"Yeah, yeah. It's nice that it's gotten so lively. Well then, Achika, I'll be doing some research until dinner."

Saying that, Katsuhito quickly shut himself in his room.

"By the way, Achika, how do you play this folk instrument?"

Ryoko, who was already feeling like a friend, asked casually, holding a white folk guitar. Achika decided not to say anything anymore.

"I have to go to the kitchen and prepare dinner."

She didn't know at that time that what awaited her after she resolutely decided that was another hellish scene, caused by Ryoko and Ayeka having eaten and scattered everything.

Around that time, the scent of delicious curry was drifting from a tent set up in a vacant lot near the Masaki house.

"Everyone, it’s dinner time!!"

At Sasami’s voice, calling out energetically with a ladle in hand, Tenchi, Kiyone, and Mihoshi gathered at the makeshift table lined with empty apple crates. Ryo-Ohki was already nonchalantly gnawing on a whole carrot. Then, suddenly, a monitor beside the table activated.

"Hey, it looks like you arrived there safely."

It was the voice of the mad scientist renowned in the vast universe for having an unparalleled brain and being a genius who transcended time and space.

"Washu-san!"

Tenchi ran up to Washu, who was smiling on the monitor screen.

"Washu-san, 'safely'... was there any danger?" Kiyone asked from the side.

"Well, time travel while fixing the time axis is harder than I thought~. Even this Washu-chan wasn't 100% sure."

"You know~"

Everyone was stunned by Washu’s leisurely talk.

"Well, well, isn't it fine? Anyway, it went according to plan. That aside, it seems those two were able to enter without Katsuhito-dono noticing."

"Yeah, with that spray... By the way, Washu-san, did you find out the exact date, time, and place something will happen to Mother?" Tenchi gathered himself and turned to the monitor.

"Ah... I'm calculating it now, but I can only say within the next seven days for now."

"No way!" Sasami popped her head out from behind.

"Also, the energy for Tenchi-dono’s shield is only good for seven days... remember, this is the crucial time."

At Washu’s words, everyone’s eyes turned serious. Oops, only one person was different. Apart from everyone else’s serious eyes, only Mihoshi was looking at her curry plate with resentment.

"We didn't have to chat at a time like this. The curry is getting cold."

As Mihoshi grumbled, Washu called out:

"Fufu, you're the same as ever. Mihoshi-dono, there's no time, hurry up and come here. It seems the cause of this incident is Ca...i...n..."

Just as she started to say that, the screen began to flicker, and Washu's face and voice faded away.

"Washu-san, Washu-san, Washu-san!!"

Tenchi called out as if clinging to the monitor. Kiyone placed her hand gently on Tenchi's shoulder and said:

"It's useless. The communication has already been cut off."

It was a short communication that didn't explain anything. Everyone looked at each other with eyes of disappointment. There were no words to follow. Only the word "Cain" was clearly and deeply etched into everyone's minds.

Chapter 2:
Year 1996, The Extinction of the Masaki Family

Collapsed walls, a floor covered in sand, broken glass windows...
Even in that house without a master, the spring sunlight shone in, pointlessly.
With a clatter, another part of the remaining wall crumbled, sending white dust dancing into the air.
And Tenchi was just there, watching it all with no way to stop it.
"Argh, damn it!"
After he shouted that unexpectedly, he suddenly realized where he was and looked around.
"W-what... was that just a dream? ...A nightmare..."

Sasami, Mihoshi, Kiyone, and even Ryo-Ohki were sleeping soundly, perhaps exhausted from the day's events.
Feeling relieved that he hadn't woken them, Tenchi quietly stepped out of the tent.
"Ahhh..."
He stretched deeply and looked up at the sky, where countless stars were twinkling.
He was reminded of the profile of that girl he had seen earlier that day on the stone steps leading up to the Masaki house. He recalled the look in her eyes as she suddenly looked around anxiously, her cheeks dyed by the setting sun.
It was the same face as the beautiful girl who had been smiling in that film.
In 1970, the spring night sky had been incredibly clear.
Why must he, a boy spending his seventeen-year-old spring in 1996, have to spend a sleepless night in that era?
"Tenchi-niichan..."
He looked back toward the tent. It was Sasami talking in her sleep.
"Tenchi-niichan..."
"...Would you like some help?"
That was...
On that day in 1996, when his grandfather had told him to clean out the storeroom, Tenchi had found an old 8mm film.
It was a film he remembered being shown once when he was still in elementary school.
He immediately recalled what kind of film it was.
The film focused on one high school girl.
Through his father's shy yet happy narration, Tenchi had learned that the high school girl was his mother.
He had thought she was a beautiful person.
However, the image of his mother in his childhood memories remained as a single, tangible reality—that of a mother.
But the woman in the film, no matter what his father said, felt like a person within the footage with no sense of reality; she only seemed like a fictional character on screen.
He had watched the film with mixed feelings.
He didn't say anything about it out loud.
Perhaps it was painful to see the lively version of his mother from when they first met, but his father never showed him that film again.
Or perhaps he had sensed Tenchi's feelings all along.
"Tenchi-niichan, would you like some help?"

"Mya~?"
While Tenchi was thinking about this with the film in his hand, Sasami had suddenly spoken up.
"Hey, hey, Tenchi-niichan, what's that?"
"This? This is an 8mm camera, a machine for individuals to shoot movies. It's a film my father shot."
"Hmm. What's on it?"
"Hmm? Do you want to see it?"
"I want to see it! I want to see it!"
"Mya! Mya!"
Feeling pushed by Sasami’s innocent smile, Tenchi felt an urge to try projecting that 8mm film.
He drew the blackout curtains in the living room, setting it up as a makeshift projection room, and loaded the 8mm film into the projector.
On the sofa, not only Sasami and Ryo-Ohki, but Ryoko and Ayeka, who had heard the commotion, were also sitting, waiting impatiently for the image to appear.
Clack-clack, whirrr went the sound of the film, and suddenly, the figure of a high school girl in a sailor suit walking along a row of cherry trees was projected.
"Who the hell is this woman!"
Ryoko immediately raised a grumpy voice.
"Tenchi-sama, please explain yourself!"
Ayeka also pressed him in a desperate voice.
"M-m-my mother, that’s who."
Tenchi felt pathetic for sounding so defensive without meaning to.
However, Ryoko kept pushing.
"Isn't she too young to be your mother?"
"O-of course she is, it was when she was in high school! My father was filming my mother when she was young! My father has always had a soft spot for this kind of machinery."
He wondered why he always ended up sounding like he was making excuses, no matter what. He liked to think it was hereditary.
Ryoko and Ayeka bit into their rice crackers at the same time and said:
"Tenchi's mother, huh..."
"Tenchi-sama's mother..."
"She looks like a gentle person," Sasami said, and Tenchi returned his gaze to the screen.
The woman walking along the cherry trees was indeed beautiful, and the smile directed at the screen was vividly radiant.

Who could have ever guessed that this girl would leave this world at the age of only thirty-four?
Seemingly satisfied, Ryoko, who had been watching the film quietly, said:
"She's a pretty good-looking woman. Your old man’s got good taste."
Before Tenchi could even open his mouth, Ayeka said:
"Since she is Tenchi-sama's mother, she is of the Juraian Royal lineage. It is only natural that she is beautiful."
"That’s weird. Aren't you also carrying the blood of the Juraian Royal family?"
"What is that supposed to mean?"
"Exactly what it sounds like. Is your circulation sluggish or something?"
Just as Tenchi was caught up in the two of them starting their usual fight, Sasami suddenly screamed loudly.
"Tenchi-niichan, the film is...!!"
Huh? As he looked back, the film was actually on fire.
He reached out to the projector in a panic to put out the fire, and then... his hand was not there.
"Whoa!"
"Tenchi!!"
"Tenchi-sama!!"
"Tenchi-niichan!!"
The three of them were shouting one after another.
"M-my body...!"
It wasn't just his hand that was disappearing.
From his hand to his arm, and even his shoulder, it was all starting to fade.
"W-what is the meaning of this? If this keeps up, my body will disappear."
The three of them were running around in a panic, having no idea what to do as he flickered in and out of existence in a translucent state.
Tenchi felt panicked.
It felt like even his consciousness was about to fly away somewhere.
His mother walking down the cherry trees, his parents walking while holding his hands, and the snowy day when he learned his mother had died...
Such images surfaced and disappeared in his mind.
Bashuu!!
Suddenly, after receiving an impact, the next moment his body returned to normal, encased in a transparent sphere.
"Phew, looks like I made it in time."
At the entrance to the living room was Washu, operating a compact console.
"There is a problem in the past!"

Washu said after making them sit in the living room, even though they didn't understand what was going on.
The shield was still active around Tenchi's body.
"As proof, look at this."
Washu handed them the burnt remnants of the 8mm film.
"What about this? Oh! W-what is this?"
Ayeka, who had taken it first, lost her words in surprise.
"What is it supposed to be?"
Ryoko took the film that Ayeka had tossed aside.
"W-what the! My mother... Tenchi's mother has disappeared from the film!!"
"What did you say?"
Tenchi snatched the film from Ryoko to look at it.
There was nothing there but the cherry trees.
The smile of his mother he had been watching just a moment ago, the V-sign she had shyly made—they had all vanished abruptly.
He lost his words.
"What does this mean, Washu!"
Ryoko screamed.
"Just as I said before, a problem has occurred in the past. Something happened to Tenchi-dono's mother twenty-six years ago. And the Masaki family, having lost their only daughter..."
Washu faltered, uncharacteristically, and as Tenchi's anxiety grew, he grabbed hold of her.
"What happened to the Masaki family, Washu-san!!"
Washu, who had lost her balance from being grabbed, closed her eyes for a moment before turning straight toward Tenchi and speaking clearly, as if she had made up her mind.
"The Masaki family died out."
"No way!"
The story was so ridiculous that he actually laughed.
"How can you say something like that? What does twenty-six years ago have to do with anything? I'm right here, in 1996, right now!"
Washu said calmly to him, as he was desperately trying to escape reality.
"Tenchi-dono, you were about to disappear earlier, weren't you? Twenty-six years ago, your mother died. And because of that, Tenchi-dono was never born into this world. In other words, a person named Tenchi Masaki never existed in the first place."
"That's impossible!"
Suddenly, Ryoko grabbed Washu.

"There's no way Tenchi doesn't exist, that he never existed from the start! Because I know Tenchi! I remember Tenchi! I remember the Tenchi who smiled at me, the Tenchi who fought alongside me..."
Seeing Ryoko shaking Washu while crying made Tenchi's heart ache.
To think that there were people who would cry this much for him, for his existence...
"That is correct. It is impossible that Tenchi-sama does not exist. A universe without Tenchi-sama has no value to me!"
Seeing Ayeka declare this clearly, Tenchi remembered.
The unexpected fragility and kindness of this person, who was otherwise so resilient.
"I know," Washu said.
"I want to save Tenchi-dono too. Besides, with the death of Tenchi-dono's mother twenty-six years ago as the catalyst, a catastrophe is occurring across the entire universe. I happened to be in the sub-space laboratory, so I was able to catch the sudden disturbance in the time factor and use a shield to block everyone here from the timeline, but that was all I could do. Even as we speak, the catastrophe is progressing, centered around the Masaki family of twenty-six years ago. If we don't protect Tenchi-dono's mother, history itself will change."
Everyone listened in stunned silence.
"How can this be..."
Someone muttered.
After that, a deep silence followed. Everyone was unable to react to something so far beyond their imagination.
Unable to stand it any longer, Ryoko yelled loudly.
"This is no joke!!"
"But it is the truth."
Washu looked at them with a more serious expression than Tenchi had ever seen.
"What the hell happened to Tenchi's mother anyway!?"
"That is what we don't know."
Washu shook her head slightly.
"What should we do? How can we save my mother?"
To Tenchi's question, Washu replied firmly.
"You must go to the past. Go to twenty-six years ago and protect your mother at all costs. I will remain here. If I don't control the time-causality law, there is a possibility that not only Tenchi-dono but everyone here will disappear. And besides, I have to figure out the cause..."
That was when it happened.
The scenery in front of their eyes suddenly began to change.

"Aah!?"
The moment everyone cried out in unison, the film disappeared, the projector disappeared, the sofa disappeared, everything vanished—
And what appeared there was the pitiful sight of a room Tenchi had never seen before.
Collapsed walls, a sand-covered floor, and from the broken glass windows, spring light shone in, pointlessly.
"It seems the catastrophe has reached the house as well. This is the 1996 appearance of the old Masaki house, where no one lives anymore..."
As if to shake off Washu's words, Tenchi rushed out of the house he didn't recognize.
The fields were gone, the grass had grown wild, and the Masaki Shrine had collapsed miserably, leaving only a crumbling torii gate behind.
It had become a ruin that looked as if it had been abandoned for decades.
"Jii-chan, Jii-chan is..."
Washu held Tenchi back just as he was about to run toward the shrine.
"Tenchi-dono, you have to trust Washu-chan on this."
The moonlight shone coldly on the ruins.
"Hey, I brought them."
That night, in front of them gathered at the side of the lake, Ryoko, who hadn't been seen for a while, brought Kiyone and Mihoshi in their pajamas from their boarding house.
Well, to be accurate, Mihoshi was still asleep, carried by Ryoko.
"After all, we have to protect the life of one person. Surely we won't be punished for getting some help from the police," Ryoko said, winking at Tenchi.
Man, this girl always acted first, and thought later.
"I didn't say I wouldn't go! I'm saying you need to explain the circumstances..."
Poor Kiyone, though it was spring, was exposed to the night air in nothing but her pajamas. She grabbed her shoulders to ward off the chill as she pressed Ryoko, but she had no choice but to fall silent at Washu's tense voice.
"We don't have time. You can listen to the explanation on the way. Listen carefully. I am going to send you to twenty-six years ago using this Time-Causality Controller Mark 2. Once you are there, you must follow my instructions. We don't have enough detailed data on when, where, and what will happen to Tenchi-dono's mother, so be careful. Whatever happens, make sure someone is with her twenty-four hours a day. Understood?"
Washu cut off her speech here and turned only to Tenchi.
"Tenchi-dono. No matter how nostalgic it may be, try to avoid making contact with your mother. It's dangerous if a time paradox occurs."

"Hey! Is it going to be alright?"
That was an uncharacteristically weak statement for Ryoko.
"Tenchi-sama, let us two overcome this difficulty together."
"Ayeka, you... taking advantage of the situation."
"My, such a time as this is exactly when the depth of our bond of love is proven."
"If we're talking about bonds, the bond between Tenchi and me is so strong that no one in the vast universe can intervene. Right, Tenchi?"
"Oh my, how unpleasant. Tenchi-sama is saying that you are a nuisance."
"Hey, hey, you two. This time is a bit different from usual. If you keep fighting, there is no way we can solve this."
Washu said, unable to watch any longer.
"I don't really care, but why are we being dragged into this?"
"I'm sleepy~"
Washu cut off Kiyone and Mihoshi's words as well.
"Just don't do anything stupid once you arrive there! If history gets any more distorted, we'll be helpless."
"Yeah, yeah, I got it."
"Ryoko, you’re the one I trust the least! Anyway, everyone, I’m counting on you!"
Saying that, Washu turned on the switch of the Time-Causality Controller.
And so, they departed for the world of twenty-six years ago.

Chapter 3:

The Year 1970, Beautiful Youth

The mild spring days continued. It was, once again, the lunch hour. The morning classes had ended without incident, and a sense of relief permeated the entire school. Some students who had already finished their lunches were out in the schoolyard, enjoying their free time playing volleyball or soccer. The cherry blossoms that had been in full bloom in the schoolyard had completely turned into lush green leaves. The cherry blossom front had already pushed further and further east, and last night's television had said that the Kanto region was now at its peak for viewing.

Achika was spending a pleasant lunch break chatting with her classmates. Her lunch box was colorfully packed with rolled omelet, wieners, salmon, spinach *ohitashi* (boiled spinach with seasoning), and more. "Achika-chan, your lunch is always so luxurious. You make it yourself, right? That's amazing." At her classmate's words, Achika beamed. "Oh, this is nothing. More importantly, Micchan, your omelet looks delicious." "Hehe, mine was made by my mother. She's a full-time housewife, so she should at least do this much for me." "You say that after making her cook it for you—"

A little away from the lively group laughing, "Cackle, cackle," were two slightly kitschy girls (?) miserably gnawing on bread. They were Ryoko and Ayeka. "...Geez, that jerk, making such a delicious-looking lunch just for herself..." While tearing into a yakisoba-filled bread bun, Ryoko said resentfully. "Really, it is all your fault. Because you went and secretly read Achika-san's diary last night... I am getting dragged into the aftermath as well." So said Ayeka. She was elegantly carrying a sandwich to her mouth. "I looked at it because I was worried if some kind of incident was happening around her!" "Is that so? In the first place, is there anyone who would leave it spread out on their desk after stealing a peek? I, for one, put it away properly..." Having said that much, she realized what she said and covered her mouth. "Ho, ho, as expected, you're used to the technique." "What did you say!" The moment the angry Ayeka stood up, the coffee milk on the desk tipped over, spilling onto the skirt of Ryoko's uniform. "You, what do you think you're doing!!" Whether the era changed or the settings changed, the two of them were a fruitless pair who repeated the same things. And again, the cold stares of those around them watching did not change either. "Hey, they're doing it again. The boarders at Achika's place." "Achika, are you okay? Should we just ignore them?" "It's fine, it's fine. If they use up their energy at school, they'll be a little quieter at home, hopefully." "You have a hard time, too." Achika had no idea

that the two people causing her trouble now would later end up causing harm to her own son. More than that, during their short time living together, while being swung around by their words and actions, Achika felt an indescribable sense of discomfort. What exactly it was, Achika's irritation grew. If she had to force it into words, it was as if they weren't breathing like people of the same world. In particular, their thought processes were not just "unhuman," but something beyond that degree. What kind of upbringing and what kind of environment could lead to that? She couldn't help but doubt their pasts.

"...Hey, Achika, that's right, isn't it..." Her classmate spoke to Achika, who had been blankly watching the two who were still causing trouble. "Eh, u-um... It's definitely strange, isn't it?" At the nonsensical answer, her classmates looked at each other.

Four days had already passed since the two had arrived as boarders at Achika's house, but there were no particularly ominous signs around Achika. If the worried two had read her diary, who could blame them? Well... everyone would blame them, wouldn't they.

Ding-dong, dang-dong.

The preparatory bell rang, announcing the start of the afternoon classes. Those who had been playing in the schoolyard and those who had been working hard on practice in the club rooms came back to the classrooms in a bustle. Among them was Nobuyuki, carrying a sketchbook. Ryoko, who was resting her cheek on her desk, watched Nobuyuki and said: "But, I'm surprised. That old man looks so much like Tenchi." "Oh, it is not too late yet, you know. As of 1996, his father is still single." Ayeka egged Ryoko on at this perfect opportunity, but there was no way such words would change Ryoko's feelings for Tenchi.

"Stupid! I'm talking about the old man in 1970 right now." "Oh, that would be a problem. If his father does not marry his mother, Tenchi-sama will not be born." "I know that! More than that, since when did 'Father' and 'Mother' become your parents?" "Well... in the future, of course." Ayeka said, turning a little red. "That is absolutely impossible!" "What did you say! What do you know about—" As always, the students in the classroom watched the two, whose conversation never met, with curiosity. "Nn... Ah, hahahahaha!" The two laughed to cover it up.

While they were doing that, the main bell rang, and the teacher entered the classroom. The person who stumbled onto the podium was, of all people, Mihoshi. Since the day the two transferred, she had snuck into the school as a classical literature teacher, but this was her first time teaching a class in this grade. "Everyone~ well, today we are talking about the fourth story of the Uji Shui Monogatari, 'The Demon of Rashomon.' Uh, this is a story where a demon, a samurai, and a princess enter a love triangle, so..." A student raised a hand. "Teacher!" "Yes, yes, what is it?" "The previous teacher already did that last

week." "Eeh, what should we do?" "What do you mean 'what should we do'... Please move on to the next part." "Even if you tell me that suddenly, I, I only know this part... Uh, well, let's do this." Mihoshi, who had been flustered, closed the textbook with a smile as if she had thought of something very good. "Teacher is feeling unwell, so I will go to the infirmary. Everyone, please study on your own quietly." The janitor who had been peeking into the classroom—no, the older woman—fell over. It was Kiyone, who had also snuck into the school. Given this situation, one can infer what Mihoshi's classes were like in other classrooms. That said, there are not many students who like class. In other words, there are plenty of students who like self-study. Needless to say, chatter began here and there as if a dam had burst.

"Hey, hey, Ayeka-san. Did you watch 'Jikan desu yo' last night?" An unfortunate girl who had picked the wrong person to talk to asked. "Huh?" "You didn't watch 'Jikan desu yo'? Machiaki's bumbling is the best, isn't it? The neighbors are also funny, and I wish there was a bathhouse like that, don't you think?" "Ah, you are talking about that drama." The classmate felt relieved that the conversation finally got through, but... "There are too many bathing scenes in that, and it is not good for education. Women should not expose their skin unnecessarily. In the first place, what is with the leading male? Long hair, scrawny, vulgar... I could go on forever. When it comes to that, Tenchi-sama is always neat and tidy..." While Ayeka was chattering on about things she didn't understand, it was only natural that the girl went off to another group. In the first place, even if you say there are many bathing scenes, didn't you appear in plenty of hot spring scenes in the Tenchi series?

"Hey, hey, Ryoko-san. Your hair, are you in a band?" It seems there are many people in this class who pick the wrong person to talk to. "Band?" "Guitar? Drums? Ah, vocals, right? You have a sexy voice, you look like you're good at singing." "Singing? If it's karaoke, I'm good at it. Recently, *tsushin* (network) karaoke plays hit songs one after another, so I learn them fast. Want to go together sometime?" "What's that? The name of some band? Ah, you're in a cover band. So cool." "Ah, well, I guess." It seems that capable people can survive anywhere they go. Frighteningly enough, the conversation between these two, while nonsensical, was very lively. Now, the classroom was heating up with people playing folk guitars, people arguing about campus disputes, and people showing off autographs of foreigners they got at the World Expo. However, Nobuyuki, even in such a classroom, was solely focused on his sketchbook.

Nobuyuki's family had been running an antique business in Kurashiki City for a long time. From a young age, he had been taken by his father to various places. They would go to the storehouses of prestigious families or company warehouses to appraise and purchase items that could be sold. Naturally, he would often go to distant places. At festivals and markets in small provincial cities, incredible bargains would sometimes appear. Every chance he got, Nobuyuki begged to

accompany his father as much as possible. Before long, the SLR camera he was bought to commemorate entering middle school never left his side. Just because he had a camera didn't mean he went bargain-hunting with his father any less. Rather, the frequency increased, and he began to carry a camera wherever he went. At first, he made everything his subject, but gradually the things he took pictures of became limited. In Nobuyuki's room, there were many framed photographs taken by him. Looking at any of them, it looked like a historic house in some town. Characteristic bay windows, gates, entrances, and some photos even showed living rooms and kitchens—perhaps he had been invited inside on purpose to take them? The fact that he often visited old provincial houses probably made these photographs possible. Eventually, by the time he became a second-year high school student, he became conscious of entrance exams and future work, and his dream of becoming an architect began to sprout, albeit vaguely. Around that time, a sketchbook began to be held in Nobuyuki's hand.

"Hey, Nobuyuki-kun. What are you drawing in that sketchbook?" Nobuyuki, suddenly spoken to by Achika, hurriedly closed his sketchbook. "N-nothing." "If it's nothing, show me." "It's nothing, so you don't need to see it." "Hmph, stingy." Nobuyuki watched the back of Achika, who went back to the group of girls while making a face at him, in vain. "Aah... Even though she finally talked to me." The active and beautiful Achika was an object of admiration for quite a few boys in school. Nobuyuki vaguely suspected that for some reason, Achika felt favorably toward him. However, his lack of self-confidence did not allow Nobuyuki to be honest. "There's no way Achika-kun could like someone like me. Maybe it's just my imagination..." Watching Achika's smile as she became the center of the girls, Nobuyuki let out a big sigh.

"Hey, hey, Achika-chan. What were you talking about with Nobuyuki-kun earlier?" Questioned by a sharp classmate (every class has someone like this), Achika feigned ignorance. "Nothing. Just casual conversation." "Hmm. But, you know, Achika-chan, you often talk to Nobuyuki-kun yourself. Maybe, you like Nobuyuki-kun?" Achika felt blood rush to her head and snapped violently. "Wh—... T-that's impossible. A guy who stands out that little?" "That's right." Another classmate who had been listening joined the conversation. "Nobuyuki-kun, you know, he's decent at studying and sports, and his face is not bad, but he's kind of plain, right? He doesn't suit you, Achika-chan." "Hahahaha, that's true." While laughing along, Achika was inwardly furious. *'Wrong! Nobuyuki-kun is good at studying and sports, and his face is good, but he's a person who doesn't show it off!'* Ah, how nice it would be if she could say that clearly, Achika thought. Achika knew that she was quite popular. But for Achika, that was also a burden. *'Being beautiful and popular is no good. If you aren't careful, you'll attract resentment from girls, and if you act a little quiet, people say you're acting stuck-up. First of all, just by talking to Nobuyuki-kun a little, I get told things like that.'* It's a line that makes you want to say "You jerk!" to someone unpopular, but people who stand out have their own hardships. Furthermore, Achika thought: *'When it comes*

to that, Nobuyuki-kun is amazing. He's good at studying and sports, and his face is quite handsome, and while it's natural for him to stand out, he's at his own pace and aloof...' Thinking that far, Achika blushed suddenly. Because the feelings she had toward Nobuyuki, which she had desperately denied earlier when teased by her classmates, were the opposite of those feelings. And Achika had long realized that those feelings were a faint love for Nobuyuki. Even so, love is a scary thing... to make people misunderstand to this extent. However, being at his own pace and aloof was a part of Nobuyuki's firm personality that continued even in 1996, and Achika, well, she saw what she saw.

"Hey, Achika!" Ryoko, who had come by her side at some point, called out. "What?" Achika answered in an extremely grumpy voice. "What's with you, still angry? I only read your diary a teeny bit, you know." "That’s right. I didn’t read at all about how you were happy to be in the same science experiment group as Nobuyuki-san, or about how you secretly bought a snapshot photo of Nobuyuki-san from the school trip in the confusion." Needless to say, Achika's head felt like it was going to crack open at Ayeka's major blunder of a statement, which could only be described as Mihoshi having possessed her. Achika, holding back the urge to slap Ayeka across the cheek in front of everyone in the classroom, clenched her trembling fists and left the classroom. Watching Achika's retreating figure, Ryoko said, not seeming to be in much trouble. "Aah, made her angry again." "There is no need to be shy, you know. If you do not clearly state your feelings, they will not be conveyed." Though Ayeka's feelings were conveyed too well and were already becoming a burden to the other party.

The large clock on the school building pointed to 2:00. The sixth-period class was physical education. Today's PE representatives were setting up the tennis net in the schoolyard. Some students were drawing white lines on the court or carrying crates of balls from the equipment room. Even so, the troublemakers were once again causing a commotion here. "Hey, Kiyone. Don't you have any better clothes than this?" Ryoko, wrapped in baggy jersey sweats, shouted. "If I show such a shameful figure, what would Father and Mother back home say..." This was Ayeka, wearing bloomers. "It can't be helped, it was sudden. First of all, it's your fault for not checking the schedule the day before." Kiyone said flatly. This was a room in the school, a simple tatami-floored janitor's room. Yes, it was Kiyone's room, and she was already fed up with Mihoshi, who would cry saying she had been boycotted from teaching, come running in after being strictly warned in the staff room, and come by saying she was sleepy. However, this time these two came by saying they had forgotten their gym clothes. If the two didn't attend class, there would be no one left to protect Achika. Having no choice, Kiyone had pulled bloomers and gym clothes from the janitor's room wardrobe and borrowed a gym teacher's old jersey to barely make it in time for the 6th-period class, and this was the thanks she got.

"Kukukuku, even so, it suits you well, Princess." Ryoko sparked it. "Hmph, I didn't know there was a class like this." "Well, I guess it's what they call fate... Kukukukuku." Her snickering was very nasty. "Hey, you should worry about yourself. The jersey you're wearing, you borrowed it from that PE teacher, right?" "Well, yeah. But, even if it's a bit baggy, it's better than that look you've got." "Oh, I don't know the details, but... I heard that teacher has a disease specific to men... Well, you are at least a woman, so I think you are safe. Ho, hohoho." Ayeka covered her mouth with her hand, laughing just as nastily while not being outdone, peering at Ryoko's face from below. "Th, th—is that t-true! Hey! Trade with me!" "I refuse." Ayeka said firmly. "You, just take it off." "I said I refuse, I refuse!" Finally, a scuffle began. Achika, who had been looking for the two, entered. "You guys, again!" Achika's sigh was pointlessly drowned out by the two's shouting.

Ding-dong, dang-dong.

"Come on, come on, the bell rang. Go." Urged by Kiyone, the two reluctantly went out to the schoolyard. The other classmates had already finished lining up. Seeing the two who arrived late, everyone resisted the urge to burst out laughing. That was because Achika, who had appeared behind the two, had a scarier face than anyone had ever seen before.

"Today, we will play tennis in doubles. Pair up in twos..." Under the PE teacher's instructions, everyone paired up. The two transfer students in their bizarre outfits were naturally left over and ended up paired together. "Why do I have to be paired with you?" "Well, that is my line." Achika called out to the two who were bickering again. "You guys, let's play against us." Achika's eyes sparkled. "Ah, fine." Ryoko, who responded lightly, would be made to regret it enough after this. There was no way the two, who held no swords and couldn't use the power of their jewels, could match the tennis balls fired by Achika, who ran around the court without restraint.

The two didn't know it until then, but Achika was the captain of the tennis club. She also possessed ability at the national sports festival level. Achika's intense serves and smashes attacked the two mercilessly. "What are you doing! You need to actually return the ball sometimes!" *Whack. Pow.* "Hey, hey! Over here, no one’s guarding it!" *Pow.* "Aah, aah, you can't even return a ball like that!" *Whack.* "Guts, guts!" "Wh, what is this! Does Tenchi's mother have a sadistic streak?" Even Ryoko was flustered.

Achika, an extremely innocent 70s girl who sublimates her anger that has nowhere to go through sports. The one who was watching Achika's figure with feverish eyes was... Nobuyuki. And Nobuyuki, who was also an extremely pure and typical 70s high school boy, admonishing his own heart for being captured by impure thoughts after being captivated by Achika's long, slender legs. In other words, despite appearances, they were a perfect match. That's how it is, everyone!

Having said that, if you know the future, you can watch the mismatched two's misunderstandings and laugh, but for the people involved who have no way of knowing such things, the misunderstanding of love is a major youth worry, wall, and setback.

And, after school. Achika, who had stood up to go home and suddenly looked out the window, found Nobuyuki sitting in front of the courtyard flower bed, enthusiastically facing his sketchbook. "Nobuyuki-kun!" "Whoa!" Suddenly spoken to from behind, Nobuyuki was surprised and dropped his sketchbook as he tried to stand up. "Ah, Achika-kun!?" Nobuyuki looked up at Achika, who was backlit, looking dazzled. "What are you drawing?" Achika said while picking up the sketchbook. "N, nothing." Nobuyuki tried to snatch the sketchbook back. But Achika held it high up. "It's fine, isn't it. Show me, show me!" "N, no, I told you..." Nobuyuki's hand, which tried to forcefully take it back, touched Achika's hand. "Ah!" Both of them shouted. "Ah, u-um... S-sorry. If you didn't want to show me, it's fine." "N, no, it's fine. If it's you, Achika-kun..." "I-is that so..." Achika sat down next to Nobuyuki and looked at the sketchbook. "Wh—what is this...?" "Houses." In the sketchbook, pictures of various houses were drawn. "I know they are houses, but why..." Achika tilted her head and looked at Nobuyuki's profile. "I like them..." "Eh!?" At the unexpected words, Achika's heart skipped a beat. "I like them... thinking of various houses like this." "Ah... th-that's what you meant." Achika turned red by herself. "Is something the matter, Achika-kun?" "No, it's nothing!" To cover it up, Achika stared intensely at the drawing. Among them, Achika stopped at one picture: a house standing among the trees. "Oh, this is nice." "Eh, r-really?" "Where is a house like this built?" "It's not built anywhere." "Eh?" "It's... my... ideal house." *(I said it. She'll definitely laugh at me. That I've always been drawing ideal houses.)* Nobuyuki cursed himself for blurting out the truth because he was too nervous. But Achika didn't laugh or tease him, and instead looked intensely at the drawing and said this: "Hmm. An ideal house, huh... It's wonderful. Hey, hey, wouldn't it be nice if there was a window right here on the roof, too?" "Eh?" Nobuyuki doubted his own ears.

This was the historic moment when Nobuyuki's admiration for Achika changed into true love. What 17-year-old boy could help but fall in love with a girl who, far from laughing at his dream, called it "wonderful" and even dreamed that dream together with him!? "Like this?" Nobuyuki took the sketchbook and drew a window on the roof of that house. "Yes, yes, that's the feeling..." "I see, I understand... Achika-kun, you have good taste." Achika's face brightened. "It's so nice. If I could really live in such a house. My house is just big and falling apart. Hey, Nobuyuki-kun, if that dream house is ever really built, will you show it to me?" Nobuyuki, carried away by Achika looking at the drawing of his house with enchanted eyes, accidentally let something slip. "Th, that's fine, but... but your house is also a wonderful traditional Japanese building, isn't it?" "Eh? Nobuyuki-kun, have you ever seen my house?" "Ah, n, no." Nobuyuki couldn't say that he had been loitering around Achika's house over winter break, hoping for a

chance encounter. "Whatever, it doesn't matter!" Nobuyuki said dismissively, snatched his sketchbook, and started walking. Achika chased after him.

"What, why are you angry? If you're going home, let's go to the bus stop together." Achika, who had chased after Nobuyuki and was about to leave the school gate, noticed a young elementary school-aged girl standing aimlessly beside the school gate. The girl, wearing overalls and a baseball cap with a peace mark badge, flashed a cute smile. "What are you doing?" Achika asked. "I'm waiting for my older sister." "Your older sister, is she a student at this school?" "Yeah, she is. More importantly, older sister, isn't it bad to make that older brother wait so long?" "Eh?" Where the girl pointed, there was Nobuyuki, who she thought had already gone way ahead. "We're going to the bus stop together, right?" Achika's mouth softened in spite of herself as she hurriedly chased after Nobuyuki, who had said that bluntly and started walking. Just as she was about to catch up to Nobuyuki, Achika, who had turned back to the girl with a lingering feeling, was caught by the eyes of a boy who was standing beside the girl and staring at her intently. But that was only for a moment, and as if he were concerned about Achika's gaze, the boy immediately turned his heel and took the girl with him. "Is something wrong?" Nobuyuki asked worriedly to Achika, who was watching the boy and girl go as if she were absent-minded. "No. It's nothing." Saying that, Achika felt as if she should remember something. However, that "something" felt like something terribly scary. "Nobuyuki-kun." Nobuyuki gently caught Achika's uneasy eyes as she called out involuntarily. "The sun is setting. Let's hurry." A sweet premonition of first love began to fill Achika's heart, pushing away her anxiety. The boy and the girl appeared at a timing that seemed to confirm the two turning the corner. The girl was Sasami-chan, the Princess of Jurai who was dressed as a Japanese girl from 26 years ago. Of course, the boy was Tenchi himself. "That was close, but did she notice?" "I think she's fine..." "Even though I know we've come to the past, when I think it's Mom, I get all excited..." "Tenchi-niichan..." "Fufu... Sasami-chan, it's a secret from everyone else." Tenchi said, winking at Sasami-chan.

"Hey! I'm hungry! Is dinner ready yet!" Ryoko, who had been lying in the living room watching TV, shouted toward the kitchen. "Really, you are such a selfish person. Why don't you help out a little?" This was Ayeka, who had been watching TV with her. "You're the one saying that, but you're not doing anything either." "I don’t mean to boast, but I’m not very confident in Earth's food yet." "Ho—then which planet are you confident in?" "Generally speaking, Earth's cuisine—cutting, boiling, roasting—it's not rational." "Is your specialty dish... solid food?" "Oh my, is that not allowed? It is quick to make, and the nutritional balance is perfect." While they were saying such things, a nice smell came wafting in. "Hum, hum, hum, fu-hum~" Without knowing it, Achika was preparing dinner while humming. The menu was veal fricassee, pumpkin potage, marinated salmon, and an Italian

salad. Compared to the Masaki family's daily budget, it was incredibly luxurious. At that moment, the front door opened.

"Oh, who is it? Ryoko-san or Ayeka-san, I have my hands full. Could you please check?" Achika shouted toward the living room. "Can't be helped, I'll go check." Rarely, Ryoko took it on, and when she went to the entrance, Mihoshi was standing there. "Good evening!" "What are you doing here?" "What do you mean? It's a home visit." "A home visit!?" "A home visit, at this hour!?" Achika, who had finished what she was doing, also came out. "Ye, yes!" Mihoshi answered brightly. Then, Katsuhito returned. "Oh, Teacher, thank you for coming." "Oh, Father, how do you know Mihoshi-sensei?" "No, that is... they said at school that the new teacher would be doing home visits... anyway, please come inside. If it's all right, why not stay for dinner..."

It felt like she was being brushed off, and she didn't feel clear, but Achika didn't ask any further. Because everyone went away quickly. "Well, whatever. It was a wonderful day anyway." Everyone was comfortably seated at the living room table. Of course, Mihoshi was too. "Ho, Achika. It's quite luxurious today." Katsuhito was surprised to see the feast on the table. "Isn't it? It took a lot more work than a cup of instant noodles." To Achika, who answered in a good mood, Katsuhito smiled wryly. Last night, she had been pouting so much because her diary had been read. "Did something good happen at school?" To this question, Ayeka answered in her place. "Well, Father. Achika-san, she went on a date after school today." *Crash!* There was the sound of a pot tipping over. Achika, turning bright red, shouted. "What kind of irresponsible things are you saying! I didn't go on a date." "Oh my, you don't have to hide it. Even though you were walking together holding hands..." This time, Ryoko stuck her neck in.

"We weren't holding hands!" To the angry Achika, Ryoko continued to tease her. "Oh, is that so? But Nobuyuki is a man, too. Didn't he try to go for a kiss?" "Th, th—there's no way that could happen!" To the flustered, innocent Achika, Ayeka also chimed in, enjoying it. "That is right. Achika-san, you must not be poisoned by such a woman. Even if you love each other, you must maintain moderation... The ABCs of love are still too early for a high school student." "Stop saying stupid things! Nobuyuki-kun is not that kind of person!!" Katsuhito, who had been watching the heated exchange of the three as usual, said: "By the way, Achika, have you finished preparing for the school trip starting tomorrow?" "Eh... yes, Father." "!?" "!?" The faces of Ryoko & Ayeka, who turned around, were filled with shock and question marks. "School trip~ starting tomorrow~!?!" No, there was one more question mark. It was Teacher Mihoshi, who was supposed to be leading the trip. "I haven't heard anything about this~"

Chapter 4:

Galactic Era 507410... Sealing the Cause of Calamity

It was the dead of night, when even the trees and plants are asleep. A man stood in the darkness. He sat perfectly straight, *seiza*-style, in front of a desk, his eyes tightly shut, looking as if he were meditating. As if struck by a sudden thought, he stood up, muttered "nature calls," slid open the *fusuma* (sliding door) facing the hallway, and walked off briskly. After finishing his business in the restroom, the man didn't return to his own room. Instead, he slid open the *fusuma* of the guest room without making a sound. Inside, the two girls who were boarding at his house were asleep. Their sleeping habits were atrocious. The one with light blue hair, in particular, had kicked off her comforter, sent her pillow flying into the distance, and was hugging her floor mattress... in short, it was a sight that was difficult for a young girl to be seen in. Moreover, her disheveled figure had a sensuality that didn't seem to belong to a high school student. The man gazed intently at the other girl, who had the refined sleeping face of a girl with Japanese features and long black hair. Her quiet, steady breathing spoke of a peaceful slumber. "Tenchi-sama..." She must have been dreaming. Thanks to the moonlight, the man's face was visible. One might not have said he looked as though his thoughts were cast toward stars billions of light-years away. But it would be more accurate to assume that this was just a lecherous old man leering at a young girl's sleeping face and disheveled state. After watching the girl for a while, the man eventually left the room, as if having made a decision. He stood on the *engawa* (veranda) and looked up at the spring night sky. Although it was an era where issues like photochemical smog and pollution were talked about, in this local city, the sky was high and the air was clear. Memories of his childhood began to revive in the man's mind...

Back then, I was still just a child, following my father and dedicating myself to sword practice every day. One day, my father said: "Yosho, the ruler of Jurai must fight not only for this planet Jurai, but for the peace of the entire universe." "Yes, Father." Around that time, I was already being called a prodigy. I was a precocious child with somewhat arrogant ideas, believing that I was the only one who could carry the future of Jurai on my shoulders.

"Yosho, today I will show you the magnificent figure of a Juraian Emperor who fought for the entire universe. Come with me." "Yes." My father took me deep into the forest that stretched out from the royal palace, a place I had never been before, traveling further and further in. I wonder how long we walked. Suddenly, it

became bright before us. We had arrived at the edge of a small lake. In the center of the lake, I could see a small shrine. My father took my hand, and as we flew as if gliding over the water, he led me to the shrine. When we arrived and I looked inside, I was surprised. The inside of the shrine was incredibly vast; I could never have believed it was the interior of that shrine I had seen from the outside.

"Where is this!?" To my surprise, my father said in a calm tone: "Yosho, what you see is not everything. That shrine is merely an entrance." It was a philosophical statement, but thinking back on it now, it doesn't feel like anything out of the ordinary. Inside the shrine, countless things resembling tree roots were enshrined, and each was emitting a weak but beautiful light. "What is this...!?" "These are the memories of space ships." "Memories... of space ships?" "That's right. As you know, every member of the Juraian royal family has a space ship that’s alive. These are the memories of space ships that have fought alongside our royal family, grown weary, and are now resting."

"Are they ghosts of space ships?" "Ghosts? In the sense of a soul, perhaps. But they are not dead. They are simply sleeping quietly. Now, come here." My father led me deeper and deeper into the shrine, and finally stopped in front of the memory of a certain space ship. "This is it. Now, try touching this memory." As my father instructed, I touched that faintly glowing object. "Whoa!" A violent shock pierced my body, and I pulled my hand away. "It is alright. That shock is the memory of a space ship. It is not reality. Now, hold your hand over it and try to trace the memory. Touch the heart of that space ship and the one who rode it." When I touched it again, I was drawn deep into the memory of that space ship.

It was an incredible power. Everything was being swallowed up... People, buildings, space ships... That was when I saw it. But it was such a vague existence. A face like a Noh mask, wearing a long cape—was that really a person? No, it is impossible for a human to have that kind of energy. An energy that consumed and withered everything. It was something completely different from the "energy to raise and nurture" that the trees of Jurai possess. The memory carved into the space ship began to move slowly. Planetary destruction terrorism, mass murder, space ship destruction... The masked monster, repeating numerous indiscriminate terrorist acts, had plunged the people of the entire universe into terror. The time was Galactic Era 507410... The Galaxy Police had put out an all-universe wanted poster for the monster and were pursuing it with all their might, but they were no match for it. The Galaxy Police sought the cooperation of the Juraian Emperor of the time, but the people of Jurai all advised the Emperor to refuse the request.

"Your Majesty, it is dangerous. From what we know so far, that thing's energy is a negative factor. You know what will happen to the positive factor that Your Majesty possesses in front of it, don't you?" The Emperor said quietly: "In front of it, my power will likely be completely drained. But its power, too, should be weakened by my energy." "Your Majesty! That is absurd. Please abandon such

thoughts. Fortunately, Jurai, which is overflowing with positive energy, is a place even that thing cannot touch. As long as the people of Jurai stay on Jurai, they are safe..." The Juraian Emperor worried. He worried, and worried, and agonized over it. In these turbulent times, if he were to leave Jurai, the people of Jurai would surely be anxious. However, he wondered if the Emperor of planet Jurai, which was the most powerful in the entire universe, could really just stand idly by while the universe faced a major crisis.

Of course, it wasn't all just noble ideals. He had a beloved wife, and precious princes and princesses. If he were to go to battle and be defeated, what would be the fate of those people... However, the Emperor made his decision. Even if he had to throw away his life, if he could stop that slaughter... And so the Emperor departed. Together with his own space ship, toward that monster... One week after he departed, the monster appeared before the Emperor as if it had been waiting. That eerie, Noh-mask-like face, worse than rumors, was projected fully across the space ship's screen. "You've come, Emperor of Jurai. I'm glad you left that planet. Even I would lose to the power of that entire planet. But now that you and the planet are separated, it is different. Here I come!" *Crack! Crack! Crack!* Violent plasma was released from both of the monster's outstretched hands. In an instant, the space ship lost its balance. A voice could be heard from deep within the light. "Come out, Juraian Emperor. And fight me!" *Crack, crack, crack!* Again, violent plasma struck the space ship directly. If this continued, the space ship would not hold. The Juraian Emperor donned his battle suit, took his sword, and leapt out into space. Immediately, the violent plasma dealt a blow to his body. It was a blow like no other. It wasn't pain or suffering; it was a sensation as if something was vanishing from within him... However, the Juraian Emperor steadied himself and challenged the monster with his brightly shining sword. It was truly a battle staking life and death. He had no choice but to believe in his own power and his fate. "Hah!" "Guoooh!" He felt a solid impact. The monster screamed. It was a sound that seemed to tear the earth apart. He attacked with a finishing blow, but just as he raised his sword, he was attacked by plasma again. *Crack, crack, crack!* "Ugh!" The battle was not easily decided. A longer, more painful time passed than any battle before it. More than anything, as time went on, the growing sense of loss within him was painful. However, he told himself, "Since I am losing this much energy, the opponent must be the same." But in the repeated offensives and defenses, he began to feel his strength exhausting and prepared for death. It was then. A violent alarm pierced the Juraian Emperor's ears. *Wee-ooo, wee-ooo, wee-ooo* "Universe-wide wanted, special energy body N.O.V. classification. Codename 'KAIN' discovered! Capturing via sub-space net!" "Gwah!" Kain, who had been exhausted by the long battle with the Juraian Emperor, was helplessly captured by the sub-space net.

While screaming this toward the Jurai Emperor: "Remember this, Juraian Emperor. From now on, only my hatred for you will be my sustenance. I will hate

you! I will hate your planet!! I will hate your descendants, I will hate them, I will hate them until the end of time, even if billions of light-years pass!!"

When I realized it, I was crying in front of the space ship's memory. Kain's scream, which sounded like it crawled from the depths of the earth, had been simply too terrifying... "Are you alright, Prince?" My father's gentle hand was placed on my shoulder, and I sobbed even harder. "There is no need for you to cry. It is a story from a long time ago..." "What happened after this?" "The Juraian Emperor returned to his country safely, but perhaps because of this battle, it is said that he was quite short-lived." "And Kain?" "Kain is sealed in the Galaxy Police's sub-space room." "Even now?" "Yes, even now." At my father's words, I felt my hair stand on end...

"Kain... is it?" Looking up at the night sky, Katsuhito muttered that to himself, and for once, he shuddered. The sky was as beautiful as ever, and the stars were twinkling in the dark night.

Chapter 5:

Tokyo, 1970 AD

Ignoring everyone’s confusion and anxiety, the day arrived.
The sky was clear, without even a breeze. If only they weren't carrying such problems... what a wonderful morning for a journey.
Since before dawn, a restless atmosphere had been enveloping the Masaki household.
"Um, Achika-san. Are you really going?"
Ayeka asked the question she had repeated countless times since last night.
"Of course! How many times have you asked me since yesterday!"
Achika said, proceeding quickly with her final luggage check.
"Hey, take my advice and don't go. There's nothing good about Tokyo," Ryoko tried to persuade her, not giving up, but Achika remained cold and distant.
"I don't want to go to Tokyo. I want to participate in this memorable school trip. If you two don't want to go, then don't come!"
"That's why I'm saying, we can't do that," Ryoko persisted.
"I don't understand what you guys are saying at all. Oh, we're going to be late! I'm leaving! Bye, Father!!"
"Damn, there’s no helping it."
"We have no choice but to go."
Ryoko and Ayeka, holding their duffel bags, reluctantly followed Achika.
As Katsuhito swept the entrance and saw the three off, his eyes seemed to twinkle, but it might have just been the way the light hit them.
The Shinkansen *Hikari*, the pride of the Japanese National Railways—no, the pride of Japan—was headed straight east, carrying the school trip group from Kurashiki West High School, including Achika.
They had just crossed the Oigawa River. For the students, their yearning for Tokyo was gradually becoming reality, and the dreams of the boys and girls were about to be fulfilled.
One would like to say they were waiting for their arrival while quietly meditating... but nope, not even a shred of such admirable behavior could be seen.
Since when has a school trip group in any time or place ever been like that?
If you looked at reality...
While ignoring the businessmen who occasionally boarded the chartered car by mistake and left with knitted brows, the high schoolers in the prime of their youth

didn't even want to sleep during the trip, just chatting and making noise endlessly.
"Hey, hey, how much spending money did you bring?"
"Wasn't it decided to be 3000 yen?"
"You're stupid. What can you buy with just 3000 yen? We're going to Tokyo, after all."
"No way, am I the only one who followed the rules?"
"Hey, let's sneak out of the hotel tonight..."
"Oh, that sounds good."
"Count me in on that!"
"Want a Pocky?"
"Oh, I want some, I want some!"
"I've got cookies over here!"
It was as noisy as poking a hundred beehives.
As for Achika, while she was excited about riding the Shinkansen for the first time and visiting a land like Tokyo that she had only seen in maps and photos, she was distracted by something else.
Even though it was a school trip, it was her first trip with Nobuyuki.
Her eyes, which looked like they were drawing large white stars, were shining brightly.
Mt. Fuji appeared on the left side of the *Hikari* in the direction of travel.
Cheers went up for the umpteenth time from various places in the car.
Once they crossed Hakone, Tokyo was right under their noses.
A classmate suddenly spoke to Achika as if just realizing something.
"Come to think of it, what happened to those two weirdo transfer students of yours? They've been unusually quiet today."
At her friend's question, Achika also thought, *come to think of it*.
They were always twice as noisy as anyone else...
It was a miracle that nothing had happened until now, enough to make her forget their existence entirely.
What happened?
She had consciously thought about forgetting the two during the trip this morning. This silence was actually eerie, and she felt something was missing.
"Who knows. They were saying things like they didn't want to go until this morning..."
"Hmm."
"If it's those two, they went off together saying they were going to the restroom a long time ago."
Another friend joined the conversation.

"Seriously, I can't tell if they get along well or not..."
Achika said with a bitter smile.
That remains an eternal mystery.
The two in question had come to a different car from the one the school had chartered—yes, to the seats of Tenchi-sama's group.
"Damn it. Why do we have to ride this annoying vehicle to move a measly 600km on this small Earth," Ryoko said, and Ayeka responded:
"Indeed. And it takes three and a half hours, too."
The two hadn't become quiet; they had just changed locations.
"It can't be helped. This is the fastest vehicle in this era," said Sasami-chan, who was much more understanding than the older sisters.
However, perhaps the biggest problem wasn't Ryoko or Ayeka, but the makeshift female teacher sitting next to them.
Her name was none other than Mihoshi, who was searching for something while buried in a mountain of huge luggage.
"Um, this isn't it, and this isn't it, let's see, ah, it's not in here either. Aww, it's not here after all, Kiyone!"
"What did you forget, seriously," Kiyone asked in an annoyed tone.
"Chocoballs. I bought them yesterday after all... I brought all the other snacks..."
Kiyone, finally snapping, shouted:
"Give me a break! I can't concentrate at all!!"
"Can't concentrate? Kiyonee-chan, are you studying something?"
Sasami peered into the book Kiyone was holding.
"Kiyone-san is supposed to watch over Mother as a local tour guide. So she's studying Tokyo sightseeing," Tenchi said, and continued.
"By the way, did anything strange happen?"
"Nothing in particular..."
"Oh, so is something really going to happen to your mother?"
Ryoko and Ayeka said, looking at Tenchi.
"Yeah. According to Washu-san's calculations, if something happens within seven days of us coming here, it would happen during this school trip..."
"Tch, it doesn't have to be during the school trip! Even so, Tokyo is just a big city, there's only so much to it," said Ryoko, who was still sulking. Kiyone, holding a guidebook, said:
"Oh, that's not necessarily true. The radio tower called Tokyo Tower is quite interesting, and even if it's a big metropolis, it seems like there are many old temples left,"
"Oh, really!"
Ayeka said, looking interested at Senso-ji while peeking at the guidebook.

"Pah, only old people get happy looking at temples."
"My, you don't understand the meaning of sentiment. Oh, I see. You are a demon, after all. Ho ho ho ho ho ho."
"What did you say-!!"
"Onee-samas, stop it already!!"
Sasami said in a stronger tone than usual.
"We're not here to play. Is it okay if Tenchi-niichan disappears?"
At Sasami's words, even the two of them shrunk back.
Tenchi sat in his seat, blankly looking out the window.
Usually, he would have been the first to admonish the noisy two...
"We're going back to the class car."
"Yeah, Achika is worrisome."
Ryoko and Ayeka felt awkward and sheepishly returned to their own car.
The Dream Super Express gradually reduced its boasted speed, running with a snake-like motion through the capital Tokyo, where skyscrapers stood in rows.
After a while, the group that stepped down at Tokyo Station had become a silent crowd, perhaps exhausted from the noise inside the train, or perhaps overwhelmed by the bustle of the big city they were seeing for the first time.
Regardless, the group arrived in Tokyo safely. And Tenchi and the others followed behind them.
Nothing happened that day, and peaceful time flowed by.
The morning of Tokyo arrived.
In front of the hotel they were staying at, several tour buses were lined up early, waiting for the Kurashiki West High School group.
"Everyone, good morning. Welcome to Suzume Sightseeing Bus. My name is Kiyone Makibi, and I will be your guide. Did you sleep well yesterday?"
"Yes!!"
Smiling at the students who answered energetically, Kiyone continued.
"Then, let us depart. Um, today's course is..."
"Bus Guide-san!!"
Nobuyuki raised his hand.
"Yes, what is it?"
"Mihoshi-sensei hasn't come yet."
"Eh?"
Just then.
Mihoshi boarded the bus while turning her luggage upside down.
"Aww, I'm glad I made it~"
"You didn't! Why did you oversleep even after coming all this way?"
"Because, the alarm didn't ring~"

Kiyone said mercilessly to Mihoshi, who was whining.
"You fell asleep without noticing the bell ringing again, didn't you?"
"No~. I just set it one hour wrong~."
A student in the front seat asked suspiciously about the pair, who clearly had a long history together.
"Um, are the bus guide and the teacher acquaintances?"
Instantly realizing the situation, Kiyone hurriedly tried to cover it up.
"N-no, Mihoshi-sensei and I, you see, we had a meeting about today last night, and we got along quite well..."
"Wow. Kiyonee, we can become best friends wherever we go..."
Mihoshi had no grasp of the situation at all.
"Um, Guide-san. It's fine that you're good friends with the teacher, but we should depart soon... we're the only ones left..."
One of the students said.
"Heh!?"
Kiyone and Mihoshi looked around, blankly. That was the only bus left in front of the hotel.
"Seriously, I'm amazed at those two's comedy act."
"Truly, what noisy wenches."
Ryoko and Ayeka whispered to each other.
Tenchi, who had boarded the bus while hidden in the mountain of luggage in the back seat where the two were sitting, thought:
That line applies exactly to you two.
Before long, the bus arrived at the Imperial Palace.
At the end of the students who joyfully got off the bus were Tenchi, Sasami, and Ryo-Oh-Ki, who had been hidden in the luggage.
"Whew. Sasami-chan, you must be tired."
"Yeah, a little."
Oh, how pitiable. Princess Sasami. If it were a different age, you could have had a *daimyo* journey.
"Fumeow."
"Ryo-chan, are you okay?"
A spaceship that races through the vast galaxy had been hidden in the luggage.
It must have been cramped indeed...
The group was walking through the Ninomaru Garden on the east side of the Imperial Palace.
Nobuyuki was busily filming with an 8mm camera.
"Oh? Nobuyuki-kun, you brought an 8mm?"

When one of the female students called out, the classmates immediately gathered around Nobuyuki.
"Wow, film me, film me."
"Yahoo!!"
"Appo!!"
There is usually one such person in every class.
Nobuyuki had been filming his classmates making V-signs or acting silly in front of the camera, but before long, his viewfinder captured Achika standing a bit away.
In the rows of cherry trees, Achika was smiling.
Beautifully, and gracefully.
Ah, youth is wonderful!!
Nobuyuki thought, not in an exaggerated way.
Tenchi and the others, who had arrived a little behind the students, saw Nobuyuki casting a passionate gaze at Achika through the viewfinder.
"So that film was shot here," Sasami said.
"Yeah. I knew it wasn't near the house, but it was a memory of the school trip."
Tenchi said, gazing with deep emotion at his young father, who was enthusiastically peering through the viewfinder.
And, while thinking of that Nobuyuki of 1996, he whispered softly in his heart.
Getting old is lonely...
At that moment, Ryoko and Ayeka came up to Nobuyuki, who was still filming with the 8mm camera, absorbed in his work.
The two had been quiet for a while, but for some reason, a chill ran down their spines.
As expected, Ryoko began to pester Nobuyuki.
"Hey you, don't just film Achika all the time."
Nobuyuki, who had been mesmerized by Achika, was flustered when spoken to suddenly, and especially because his secret intention was exposed.
"N-no, that's not it."
"My, Father is turning bright red; you were quite pure when you were young, weren't you?"
"Huh?"
Nobuyuki was even more confused by Ayeka's incomprehensible talk.
Tenchi and Sasami-chan, who were watching this situation from the shadow of a tree, sighed, although it was a predicted outcome.
"Seriously, Onee-samas, after Sasami said so much in the Shinkansen."
"Shh, Sasami-chan, let's hide over here."

Tenchi, who spotted Achika approaching from the other side, hid with Sasami behind the tree.
"Hey, what's going on?"
Not just Achika, but everyone gathered around. Wherever Ryoko and Ayeka go, there are many troubles, but the image that something might always happen attracts people's hearts.
No, it's not like that! Everyone is an incident-lover to a greater or lesser degree; perhaps the general public is especially curious about other people's troubles. However, for the target of the topic, it's unbearable. The target of this place was the poor camera boy. And the beautiful model lady who didn't know the situation.
"What's wrong? What's wrong?"
Another troublesome one appeared. Mihoshi.
"Hey, everyone, please listen. Nobuyuki-kun is filming only Achika-san—"
Ayeka announced in a loud voice, taking the opportunity.
Achika, even though she knew the topic was about her and Nobuyuki, listened blankly.
"It's youth~"
Mihoshi immediately chimed in.
"Yeah~, it's really making me jealous!"
Ryoko egged them on.
"Cut it out~!"
Achika finally stopped everyone, who were saying whatever they pleased, with her face bright red.
But they were a bunch of people who were unfazed by such pain.
"If your old man saw this kind of scene, he'd faint," Ryoko said, gave an exaggerated cough, and began a cheesy act with Ayeka.
"Achika..."
It was an imitation of Katsuhito.
"What is it?"
Ayeka played Achika. Such setups and timing were seasoned routines without rehearsal, and could be called a talent.
"You, today, that..."
"Yes?"
"Did you... have a date with Nobuyuki-kun?"
"Eh! W-what are you talking about, I didn't have a date!"
If someone doesn't stop them, they don't know when to quit.
"You even acted as a model for his 8mm, didn't you?"
Driven to desperation, Achika screamed.
"You guys!!"

"There's no need to hide it, right?"
"Right—"
Ryoko and Ayeka nodded to each other. Nothing could match this two-person united front.
Tenchi, Sasami-chan, and Ryo-Oh-Ki, who were watching from the shadow of a tree far away, wanted to cover their eyes.
"What are they doing! Ugh..."
Tenchi said, irritated.
"After Tenchi-niichan's father and mother were about to get closer..."
"Meow."
"Are they forgetting their original purpose..."
Tenchi, who let out a deep sigh, suddenly began to disappear.
"Whoa! Not again!"
"Tenchi-niichan!"
However, it didn't last long. After a while, his body returned to normal. Tenchi and Sasami-chan inadvertently sat down on the spot.
"...I wonder if the effect of Washu-san's shield is weakening..."
"Yeah... we have to hurry."
"Meow."
Ryo-Oh-Ki looked up at the two anxiously.
Ignoring Ryoko and the others, Achika said to Nobuyuki.
"Nobuyuki-kun, we have two hours of free time in Asakusa. Shall we go around together?"
"U-um... yeah."
Ryoko, who was ignored, was offended and pestered him.
"Oh, oh, you lady-killer! You're hot."
"You guys, don't say weird things to Nobuyuki-kun!"
"My, my, what do you mean by 'weird things'?"
Achika went at Ayeka, who was playing dumb.
"I mean things like we had a date, or held hands, or... the ABCs of love..."
"The ABCs of love...?"
Seeing Nobuyuki raise a strange voice, Achika, who had turned bright red, covered her face and fled the scene.
"Idiot! I don't know you anymore!!"
Only those words were left behind.
Nobuyuki realized it.
He reflexively chased after her. (Perhaps some initiative has sprouted)
"Hey, Achika-kun. Wait!"

—--------After the two left and the gallery also scattered, Tenchi, Sasami, and Ryo-Oh-Ki came out from hiding.
Tenchi, although it was to be expected, had a grumpy face.
"Give me a break, you two."
"That's right, why do you have to be so confrontational?"
"Meow, meow, meow!"
Sasami and Ryo-Oh-Ki also admonished the two.
"Achika, just because she's blood-related, is simple and easy to tease, just like someone," Ryoko said, glancing at Ayeka.
Ayeka wasn't one to lose either.
"My, you want to say that I resemble Tenchi-sama's mother. I hate it. It's said that men all have a hint of a mother complex, evenTenchi-sama ..."
"I'm just talking about the simple part. In terms of appearance, you and Achika are like the moon and a soft-shelled turtle, the sun and a loach."
"What did you say—!!"
She shook with anger and tried to grab Ryoko, but Ryoko instantly kicked the ground and jumped up.
Ayeka, who had been dodged by her transparency technique (?), lost her balance and fell on the spot.
However, Ryoko's gaze was not there. It was Ayeka's solo sumo match.
"Who are you, stay right there!!"
In the direction Ryoko screamed with a changed expression, there was a figure moving away as if fleeing through the trees.
Ryoko immediately followed, but the man's speed in fleeing was fast, and only the trees swaying in the spring breeze rustled afterward...
"Got away. Who on earth is it, they were certainly watching our situation..."
To Ryoko, who returned looking frustrated, Sasami said with a serious face.
"Ryoko-nee-chan, Tenchi-niichan's body began to disappear..."
"W-what did you say!"
Beside Ryoko, who was stunned, Ayeka's face also looked pale.
And then, they were shaken further by the bus to Asakusa. The Nakamise-dori, a temple approach to Senso-ji, famous as the main gate of Senso-ji, the Kaminarimon.
It is one of the famous sightseeing spots in Tokyo.
"Well everyone, we have two hours of free time from now on. The assembly is at four, ah, wait a moment. There are still some precautions..."
They only had two hours of fun, fun free time.
As if they couldn't listen to carefree Mihoshi's words, the students scattered toward the temple approach, each trying to go first.

The temple approach was crowded with lively souvenir shops and cheap candy stores.
"Oh, hey, hey. Nobuyuki-kun, let's buy *ningyo-yaki*."
"Yeah. Looks delicious."
"Oba-chan, give us *ningyo-yaki*."
Walking ploddingly and quietly behind Nobuyuki and Achika, who looked happy and harmonious, were Ryoko and Ayeka.
Listen. Never interfere with Father and Mother again. If they don't get married, I won't be born.
What Tenchi had said in a tone stronger than usual had made the two act submissively.
However, it wasn't just because of his own existence that Tenchi said that.
Tenchi knew how much Nobuyuki loved his mother, never attempting to remarry even while flirting with girls at work.
And he knew that this happy time for the two wouldn't last very long either...
Tenchi wanted to let them enjoy this moment, right now, as much as they could.
"Aww, I lost again... Kiyonee, lend me 10 yen~"
At the candy store, the mountain of losing lottery tickets was piled up at the feet of Mihoshi, who was drawing a lottery while holding candy in one hand.
Does this person really understand the purpose of this trip to 26 years ago...?
Come to think of it, when Washu was talking about the situation this time, I feel like Mihoshi was sleeping while leaning on Ryoko...
Meanwhile, thanks to their future son, Nobuyuki and Achika, who were finally spending a quiet time, came to the temple grounds of Senso-ji, near the construction site of the five-story pagoda.
"What kind of construction is it?"
"They're rebuilding the five-story pagoda... It seems it remained burned down after the war."
"Hmm, it's quite a large-scale project."
"Yeah. They say it will be 48m tall when completed."
"You're knowledgeable, Nobuyuki-kun."
"No, I just like it. Buildings... More than that, Achika-kun, smile, smile."
Nobuyuki, praised by Achika, set up his 8mm camera to hide his embarrassment and pointed the lens at Achika.
Achika, while feeling tickled by Nobuyuki's gaze through the viewfinder, sent a V-sign toward the camera.
"Truly, it's youth..."
Ayeka, who had been quietly watching over the two from a little distance, said enraptured.

"It's pure. Just like watching me and Tenchi-sama..."
"What did you say. Why you and Tenchi."
It seemed her limit for being quiet had reached its end. Their fight started again.
"First of all, does Tenchi fit in with this kind of cozy setting like a 26-year-old youth drama! What fits Tenchi is racing through space with me."
"My, are you saying you want to take Tenchi-sama as a companion on a wanted fugitive's journey?"
"○△×!"
"×○×☆!!"
"◇△!!"
"△◎××!!!!"
I will omit the rest because it's troublesome.
If you are a curious person, please try to apply your own insults.
While carrying out an intense argument, Ryoko suddenly wore an even harsher expression and whispered to Ayeka.
"It's the guy from earlier, let's go!"
No sooner said than done, she teleported in front of the man lurking in the shadow of a pillar.
Ayeka stood in front of the man who was about to turn on his heel and escape.
"Wait!"
Ryoko fired an energy ball at the man who pushed Ayeka aside and tried to flee.
As expected, action first.
"Ugh."
Ryoko generated an energy sword in her right hand and held it to the man, who was crouching on the spot after receiving the impact.
"Who are you! I'll have you spit out your true identity."
"Why are you following Achika-san?"
Pressed by the two, the man opened his mouth painfully.
"I am... Saeba Jin... Galaxy Police."
"Galaxy Police?"
"Galaxy Police... Mihoshi and Kiyone's colleague?"
"I don't know such a member. I am from the headquarters'... Special Task Force..."
"S-p-e-c-i-a-l T-a-s-k F-o-r-c-e?"
Following Ryoko, who asked suspiciously, Ayeka continued.
"Don't lie. Why would the Galaxy Police have to target Achika-san?"
"What I am targeting is not that girl. It is the disaster-cause that will appear before that girl in the near future. I am chasing the escaped disaster-cause..."

Surprised by those words, the two looked at each other's faces, and taking advantage of the opening, the man jumped onto the main hall of Senso-ji and disappeared.
"Did you hear?"
"I heard it, 'Kain'."
Hearing from an unknown GP member the words that Washu left behind, the two were caught by a bad premonition...
That night, the 6 people and 1 creature who had come from 1996 gathered in Mihoshi's room, which was given to her as a private room in the hotel.
"Saeba Jin? I don't know him."
Kiyone, told by Ryoko the name of the GP member from the daytime, tilted her head.
"Seriously, I thought the school trip would finally end with the Tokyo Tower viewing tomorrow..."
With the unexpected appearance of a man called a GP member, everyone including Ryoko had a grave look, but...
"Um, I know that person."
Kiyone urged Mihoshi, who was in her usual slow tone.
"If you know him, say it quickly!"
"I heard about him from my grandfather. If I recall correctly... he is a person in the Special Task Force."
"Special Task Force... that one?"
At Kiyone's shocked expression, Ryoko pressed her this time.
"What is that Special Task Force?"
"It's a secret department within the GP. It mainly chases escaped important criminals... oh, disaster-cause?"
As Kiyone said that, Sasami shouted, as if to drown out her voice.
"Everyone, hurry! There's a communication from Washu-san!!"

Chapter 6:

Cosmic Era 507510... GP Annihilation

"Yoo-hoo, everyone, how are things going?"
Washu appeared on the communication monitor and asked cheerfully.
"'How are things going?'—don't give me that! You said the last communication was cut off, and then there was nothing but silence. What exactly have you been doing?!"
Ryoko snapped at the screen, and the others gathered around it as if clinging to it.
"Sorry, sorry. The time axis seems to be unstable, so the communication didn't go well. But this genius Washu has made some improvements, so you can rest easy now."
Before Washu could even finish, Kiyone pushed past everyone else and moved to the front of the monitor.
"Washu-san, the disaster... could it be...?"
The true identity of the terrifying source of the disaster that had just occurred to her!
Kiyone spoke the words, hoping Washu would deny her theory.
"As expected of you, Kiyone-dono! You've studied your Galaxy Police data well. That's right, the cause of this incident is that very source."
"But, that's just..."
Kiyone, with an expression of disbelief, was about to say something else when Ryoko interrupted from the side.
"Stop acting all mysterious and just say it already! Washu."
"Yes, yes. You're as impatient as ever. I'm about to explain it to you..."
Washu began to speak in an unusually grave tone.
"Kain. That is the name of a mysterious figure whose age, gender, origin, and history are all unknown. Classified as a special energy entity, N.O.V., codename 'K-A-I-N.' Criminal number 07069... aside from being 'Rank A,' not a single shred of identifying information has been found to this day.
In Cosmic Era 507410, he was put on a universal wanted list for planet-destruction terrorism and murder. With the cooperation of the Jurai Emperor at the time, he was captured by the Galaxy Police's sub-space net.

Before he was arrested, he destroyed 13 planetary nations and 275,000 ships of the space fleet. The situation at that time involved him resisting the GP Grand Fleet with his own psychic abilities. It’s not even comparable to Ryoko; he’s more like a living supernova...
And, he was supposed to have been imprisoned in the sub-space room at the Galaxy Police headquarters ever since his arrest. But this time, it seems this Kain has escaped and come to Earth 26 years ago."
"But Washu-san, even if Kain escaped, interfering with 26 years ago is..."
Kiyone said, taking on the role of the Galaxy Police.
"Hmm, since he’s someone who can escape from sub-space, it’s no wonder he could have an impact on time and space."
Just then, a voice came from somewhere else.
"Won't you let me handle the rest?"
It was the GP officer she had met earlier in the day, Saeba Hito, who was standing at the entrance of the room before anyone noticed.
"It's you...!"
Washu restrained Ryoko as she was about to pounce on the man.
"Stop it, Ryoko. You are a survivor of the Galaxy Police, aren’t you?"
"Survivor, you say...?"
Kiyone asked back, looking suspicious at Washu’s words.
"The Galaxy Police has been annihilated."
At Washu’s flat, decisive statement, everyone froze.
"That's right. It was all because of him, Kain!"
The man began to speak.
"That day, I was visiting headquarters for my usual routine report. The report finished without any issues, and I was making small talk with a longtime colleague at the observation café on the top floor.
The infinitely expanding universe is mysterious no matter how many times you see it, and the stars seemed to be whispering something. That day was especially beautiful, and I got sentimental in a way that wasn't like me at all; my colleague even laughed at me.
According to him, he was heading out on a long, routine patrol in about an hour. He said he was tired of having to deal with stars, galaxies, and the dark universe, so he didn’t want to be doing space observation right here.
That was when it happened. Suddenly, the person in front of me disappeared. No, it wasn't just him. At least half of the people in the café vanished into thin air. And the next moment, a violent shock and a sudden gust of wind occurred, and an alarm sounded.

‘Emergency, emergency! An anomaly has occurred in the sub-space room. Ordinary space is being swallowed, centered on the core block!’
At that announcement, I rushed to the electronic control room that manages the sub-space room.
Running through an unstable space where ripples continued to run intermittently, what I saw when I reached the electronic control room was the red lamp automatically blinking ‘KAIN-LOCK-OFF’ on the computer monitor.
I doubted my own eyes.
The core block of the sub-space room was surrounded by double and triple walls and locked down. There was no way he could have escaped!
No, but he did escape. While emitting terrifying plasma...
Forced by necessity, the central control room initiated level-one security. They tried to seal the core block with a dimensional shield.
The shield spread, emitting infinite light, and wrapped around the sub-space-ized core block.
For a moment, silence returned, and just as it seemed the operation had succeeded, an aurora-like light was released, and the shield vanished.
And next, the influence of his power began to reach the headquarters building. Blocks here and there began to disappear, patrol boats vanished, and every GP officer was wiped out. Leaving behind no corpses, nothing...
Miraculously escaping the disaster, I learned from the distortion in the time axis that he was trying to move spatially to a minus point... the past. So, I followed him and came here to this Earth 26 years ago. The moment I was swallowed by the time axis, that is, the moment of space-time transfer, the last thing I saw was the figure of the headquarters being absorbed into the sub-space..."
Staring at the man who had finished speaking, Washu asked,
"So, why did you think Achika-dono was being targeted?"
"That is, of course, because she is of the bloodline of the Jurai Royal Family. Kain is one who harbors resentment toward Jurai. Long ago, when Kain, who was repeating destruction and slaughter all over the universe, was captured by the Galaxy Police, the one who cooperated was the Jurai Emperor of that time. Since then, he has hated Jurai and become a demon of revenge."
"What does that have to do with Achika?"
Ryoko asked, feeling irritable.
"Before coming to this Earth, he headed to Jurai and attacked the current Juraian Emperor."
"That doesn't have anything to do with Achika and the others."
"If that were the case, it would be fine, but even though the current Juraian Emperor wasn't directly involved, he was targeted and sustained damage. It’s not

strange to think that Kain intends to take revenge on every member of the Juraian royal family. Naturally, the first prince, Yosho-dono, and his daughter, Achika-dono, would not be exceptions."
"Tch, so it's just collateral damage, huh?"
Ryoko clicked her tongue.
"That's not all... his ability utilizes anti-Juraian energy... it’s better not to have anyone around with high-level Juraian energy."
Tenchi, who had been silent until then, said quietly.
"But why my mother... my mother was born and raised as an ordinary Earthling. She shouldn't know anything about Juraian energy, let alone that she carries Juraian blood. Moreover, she shouldn't be able to sense high-level Juraian energy..."
"Hmm, in that sense, Katsuhito-dono or Tenchi-dono could have been targeted first, though..."
Washu said calmly.
"I don't know why he went through the trouble of coming 26 years into the past to target her..."
Saeba Hito continued.
"...We can think about that part slowly later... but the fact that you showed up here means you’re going to lend us your strength, right, GP officer?"
Washu winked at Saeba Hito from inside the screen.
Somewhat flustered and confused by the wink, Saeba Hito replied.
"It’s not that I’m cooperating with you guys. I just thought that if the enemy is the same, it’s better to have more people."
"Well, you’re not very honest, are you?"
With a shrug at the way he answered like a bureaucrat concerned with classified information, Washu continued the discussion.
"Well, that’s fine. Anyway, we don’t have time, so let’s move on. There is a 99% probability that Kain will attack Achika-dono within the next 24 hours. The location is where the broadcast tower is."
"Broadcast tower... you mean Tokyo Tower!?"
Tenchi shouted.
"Aw~, I was hoping to take a commemorative photo from the observation deck~"
That was Mihoshi. It’s this pattern again, as expected.
"You, be quiet!"
Kiyone covered her mouth.
"Yes, Tokyo Tower. As of 1996, it’s Japan’s leading broadcast tower. Kain is likely going to amplify his own power using the energy of this tower to attack Achika-dono. But, I won’t let him. I have the data here from when Kain was

captured. At that time, he was captured using the sub-space net and the Juraian Emperor's Juraian energy. In other words, we must prepare something comparable to Jurai energy. But in this era, there is no one who possesses energy on the level of the Jurai Emperor..."
Washu frowned slightly.
"Grandpa, in that case..."
Tenchi said as if to himself.
"Even with Katsuhito-dono, this amount of energy is impossible. Even if there were..."
"Even if there were...?"
"The Juraian Emperor who contained Kain died prematurely afterward."
"Ehh!"
Everyone shouted in unison.
"So, what this genius Washu came up with is a special ‘Spirit Wave Barrier Generator.’ This is a device that creates a barrier by amplifying the spirit waves of trees on Earth and linking them to the sub-space net."
"What’s that... I don’t really understand what you’re saying..."
Washu, interrupted by Ryoko, answered angrily and roughly.
"In other words, it’s a device that combines Juraian energy and the sub-space net!"
Then, she took out some kind of device and continued her explanation.
"As soon as this communication ends, I will spatially move five of these devices to that room. You all, please install these devices in five locations centered around Tokyo Tower.
However, it’s not just anywhere that will do.
I’ll send a map along with the devices, so make sure you install them in the exact checked locations.
Other locations won’t work.
After that, when Kain appears at Tokyo Tower, I will activate the ‘Spirit Wave Barrier Generator’ by remote control. However, the operating time for this device is 10 minutes. If you can’t capture Kain within 10 minutes, this plan is over."
"10 minutes! Is that enough?"
Ryoko was complaining again.
"That’s the limit. After all, it’s an instant Jurai energy generator. You should be glad it even works at all."
"Will Jurai’s power really be generated on Earth?"
Even Ayeka seemed worried.
That was when—
"Ah."

Suddenly, everyone in the room shouted, looking at Tenchi.
Tenchi’s body blurred, becoming semi-transparent.
But it was only for a split second, and the next moment, he returned to normal.
"That’s a sign that the time limit is approaching. But until Kain appears, the shield should function perfectly. Well then, good luck to everyone."
After she said that and Washu vanished from the screen, the aforementioned devices and a map suddenly appeared in front of them.
"I wonder where on earth we're supposed to install these."
Kiyone held the map and began to check the installation locations.
"Meguro, Mejiro, Meki..."
"Wait, is this talking about the ‘Edo Five-Colored Fudo’?"
Tenchi, who had been peering at the map with Kiyone, suddenly said, as if it had occurred to him.
"What is Five-Colored Fudo?"
Sasami came to Tenchi’s side and asked.
"Yeah. As a protection for Edo Castle, there are five Fudo Myoo enshrined in five locations. I remember there were also Meaka, Meao... there’s no mistake!"
"I see. Using the sacred sites of the past to collect the energy of Earth’s atmosphere. As expected of that mad scientist, exactly the kind of thing Washu would think of."
Saeba Hito, who had been listening to Tenchi and the others' conversation, said with admiration.
"It’s too early to relax, old man. Her inventions are certainly genius, but they’re often useless too."
Following Ryoko, who said that challengingly to Saeba Hito, Mihoshi said,
"Come to think of it, Ryoko-san was also Washu-san’s invention, wasn’t she? Ahahahaha."
All is lost.

Chapter 7:

Year 1970, Anomaly Over Tokyo

It was a refreshing morning.
Tokyo was perfectly clear that day. It was rare for this time of year, and one could see far into the distance.
The crisp, clear weather put everyone in a good mood. From breakfast time, a sense of excitement filled the air.
The students, who had been enjoying their school trip since the day before yesterday, were boarding the tour bus with excited expressions, as they were finally set to visit Tokyo Tower on this, their final day.
The tour guide greeted them in a bright voice.
"Good morning, everyone. I hope you all rested well last night."
"Yes!"
Full of energy and free from travel fatigue, they replied in unison.
One student asked, "Miss Guide, what happened to the tour guide from yesterday?"
"Oh, she said she suddenly had a stomachache, so I've been assigned to guide you today."
"Eh? Wasn't Miss Mihoshi also suffering from a stomachache?" asked another student, sounding surprised.
"Those two were close friends. They must have eaten something bad together last night and got food poisoning," reasoned a student with a sharp tongue, causing everyone to burst into laughter.
If Kiyone had heard this, she would have been on the verge of fainting.
"Come to think of it, what about the two transfer students?" asked Nobuyuki, who had cheekily claimed the seat next to Achika today.
"They're also suffering from stomachaches, apparently. Ryoko-san, Ayeka-san, and even Miss Mihoshi and the guide... to all have food poisoning at the same time... I wonder what they ate?" Achika replied, looking slightly worried but unable to suppress her amusement.
"Hahahaha... I see. Yesterday, they were eating things like *ningyo-yaki* and *kaminari-okoshi* all day. Those people seem like they're quite the gluttons."
"That's true... Ufufufu."
The two looked at each other and laughed happily. If Ayeka had heard that, she would have been on the verge of dying from indignation.

"But, I feel a little sorry for them," Achika whispered to herself, looking up at the hotel as it faded into the distance from the bus window.
At that same time, Tenchi and his group were also about to leave the hotel. They all had knapsacks on their backs and maps in their hands.
"Achoo!"
Ayeka sneezed.
"Oh... elder sister, did you catch a cold?" Sasami-chan asked worriedly.
"Hmph, someone must be talking behind my back," Ayeka snapped, sensing that a familiar argument was about to start.
"Why must I be spoken ill of even after coming to this era?"
"Well, I suppose it's the karma you were born with."
"W-what did you say!"
The situation was once again on the brink of an explosive argument. However, with an important task ahead, Kiyone stepped in to mediate.
"Now, now, save the fighting for later, okay? As we discussed yesterday, make sure to set the devices at each location without fail. Ryoko-san, go to the Mejiro Fudo; Ayeka-san, the Meao Fudo; Sasami-chan and Ryo-Ohki, the Meaka Fudo; and Mihoshi, go to the Mekin Fudo. I will go to the Meguro Fudo. Saeba-san and Tenchi-san, please go ahead to Tokyo Tower and prepare for any emergencies. The bus will be touring Yoyogi Park from the morning and having lunch on the way. They will arrive at Tokyo Tower after 1:00 PM, so everyone must have your sets finished by then. There is still time, so look at your maps carefully and don't make any mistakes."
At this moment, Kiyone did not realize she had made a terrible mistake. She had said "There is still time" to keep everyone from panicking.
To *this* group... what a disaster.
Ryoko, heading to Konjo-in (Mejiro Fudo), boarded the Yamanote Line inner loop after parting ways with the group at Tokyo Station. Though the commuter rush had the train at 200% capacity, the overhead racks were empty.
"Here goes nothing!"
She hopped onto the rack, laid down, and began studying her map. Naturally, no passenger dared to say a word to her.
Looking at the map, Mejiro Fudo was not far away.
"I heard they said this train goes around in circles, right? Since there's still time, I might as well take a nap for one full loop. You need to relax and refresh before an important job."
Thinking this, Ryoko completely ignored the stares of the passengers and fell soundly asleep.

Ayeka, heading to Kyogakuin (Meao Fudo), took the Yamanote Line directly to Shibuya Station. Getting to the Hachiko statue was fine, but despite there being a police box right in front of her, she made the mistake of agonizing over her map instead of asking for directions.
"Miss, where are you going?"
She was approached by a suspicious-looking man, but being a truly sheltered young lady, she assumed he was a kind person and showed him the map to ask for help.
"Oh, Kyogakuin? I'm just heading that way myself. I'll take you there, you'll be fine now."
Needless to say, the direction the man started walking in was completely different from Kyogakuin. I'll leave it to your imagination where he was taking her.
After parting ways at Tokyo Station, Mihoshi stayed inside the station for some reason and was eating standing-up soba.
"Whew... slurrrp, ah, delicious! You said there was still time, right? First, I have to fill my stomach. Ah, Mister! One refill please!"
Mihoshi was completely under the mistaken impression that she was at a Kyushu-style street food stall.
"Oh, so standing-up soba doesn't have refills? Too bad. Oh, there's a kiosk, I'll go buy some snacks. I ate all the ones I brought for the trip. Ma'am! One pack of Chocoballs, please!!"
In the midst of all this, Mihoshi completely forgot the platform Kiyone had told her to board from. Well, that was predictable. However, the fact that she even left the map for Mekin Fudo at the soba shop was a blunder that would make any fortune-teller cry.
Sasami-chan and Ryo-Ohki, heading to Nan-yoji (Meaka Fudo), were crushed in the commuter rush but managed to reach the correct station on the Yamanote Line. However...
"Little girl, are you alone? Why aren't you at school today?"
An auntie with a fake, overly gentle smile approached her. This auntie was a juvenile guidance counselor.
"Ah, um, Sasami has a promise with her big sisters."
"Big sisters?" The woman flashed a glimpse of a gold tooth.
"Yes. If I don't do this properly, Tenchi-niichan will be in a terrible situation..."
As Sasami tried to run away, the woman grabbed her arm with that same smile.
"Please, tell me all about that story slowly."
Kiyone, heading to Ryusen-ji (Meguro Fudo), wisely used a taxi and reached her destination quickly without getting caught in traffic. She was walking steadily

through the temple grounds toward the Fudo statue when her feet suddenly felt heavy. A girl of about three years old was clinging firmly to her leg.
"Mommy~, Mommy~"
"Eh?"
Kiyone was bewildered by the girl's constant calling, but she was Galaxy Police. Even if the era and place were different, she was an officer who stood by the citizens. She asked the girl with a gentle smile, "Little one, are you lost?"
"Mommy~, Mommy~"
"Did you come here with your mom?"
"Mommy~, Mommy~"
Although it was out of her jurisdiction, she couldn't just leave such a young child behind. The police box she had passed in the taxi came to mind.
"I understand, so please don't cry anymore. Let's go to the police station with me. I'll help you find your mommy."
She tried to start walking while holding the girl's hand, but the girl remained clinging to Kiyone's leg and sat down on the spot.
"Noooo~, Mommy~, Mommy~"
"Don't give me that 'noo'... you're making *me* want to cry."
But the girl wasn't going to budge an inch.
"Aaah~, enough! I'm running out of time~!"
"I wonder if everyone is doing well," Saeba Hito and Tenchi were waiting ahead at Tokyo Tower. It was almost time for the bus carrying Achika and the others to arrive.
"Oh, looks like the bus has arrived," Saeba Hito, who had been watching outside, turned to Tenchi. Students were pouring out of the bus. Among them, Achika and Nobuyuki were walking toward them, talking happily. It seemed they were planning to join the line for the elevator to the special observation deck.
"Finally, the school trip is ending here at Tokyo Tower," Achika said to Nobuyuki. Over the three days of the trip, the two seemed to have become very close.
"Yeah, it went by fast. But I'm really looking forward to the observation deck." Nobuyuki seemed immensely happy about going up.
"Yes. I'm sure that if we look at the ground from such a height, our worries will seem tiny," Achika said quietly, looking up at the deck.
"More importantly, Achika-kun, are you feeling okay? You really startled me earlier."
Nobuyuki looked at Achika's face as if he had just remembered.
"Yes, I'm sorry for worrying you. I was just a little tired."

"I suppose so. You must be nervous being in a place you don't know, and everyone's been staying up late making noise. You haven't been able to sleep well."
While walking through Yoyogi Park, the first destination of the day, Achika had been hit by a sudden headache. It was so intense that she couldn't bear the pain and crouched down. Nobuyuki, who was walking with her, had carried her to the shade of a tree. After resting for two or three minutes, she felt fine. Her usual smile returned as if nothing had happened. That was what had occurred.
Around that time, Washu was feeling irritated in front of the "Spirit Wave Barrier Generator."
"Ah, enough! What is the meaning of this? It's already past 1:00, and the devices haven't been set at any of the points!"
Let's look at the people entrusted with the important task once more.
Ryoko finally woke up from her long nap and, seeing the clock at Mejiro Station, turned pale.
"Geh, it's past 1:00! You've got to be kidding me!"
She desperately started running down the station stairs, but... "Ah, Tenchi's going to die at this rate."
Ignoring the eyes of those around her, she flew through the sky and passed through walls to head to Konjo-in. Reaching it in an instant, she frantically set the device. Just as she let out a sigh of relief, she stole an offering box she didn't even want, just to hide the embarrassment of having done her job so seriously.
"Well, a human has to have this much playfulness. Still, this is a pathetic amount of money."
Human? Was she...? Putting that aside, Ryoko tends to become overly serious whenever it's for Tenchi. But once she realizes it herself, she becomes unable to be honest.
Ayeka was brought to a shady hotel by a shady man and ended up making him regret it.
"How dare you deceive me, the First Princess of the Planet Jurai!"
After knocking the man out without difficulty with slaps, claw attacks, and spinning kicks—techniques hysterical and hardly befitting a princess—Ayeka rushed outside.
Ah, if something happens to Tenchi-sama because of me, I, Ayeka, cannot go on living!
Thinking this, she grabbed the collar of a salaryman walking down the street.
"Which way is Kyogakuin! Speak up! It won't be in your best interest to lie to me!!"
It was more of an extortion than asking for directions. However, a person who could forgive this as being due to pure, devoted love probably doesn't exist.

Nevertheless, after leaving over ten victims in her wake, Ayeka finally reached Kyogakuin (Meao Fudo) in Sangenjaya.
"Tenchi-sama, I have done it!"
Tears glimmered in Ayeka's eyes as she finished setting the device. She then went before a *votive tablet* for marriage and put her hands together.
"Please, let me be with Tenchi-sama forever. And let that annoying Ryoko disappear, right away..."
Now, here is Sasami-chan, who was brought to the police box.
"You don't need to be afraid. You were told to do this by those scary older sisters, right? That if you didn't listen, your brother would be in big trouble."
The guidance counselor auntie had a completely wrong idea. In other words, she thought the delinquent girls were using Sasami's beloved brother to make her obey... Wait, wasn't that actually not wrong?
In any case, Sasami was running out of time. She was at a total loss. She instinctively looked at Ryo-Ohki, but... "Alright, Sasami-chan. Transform into Pretty Sammy!" ...he, of course, didn't say that.
Looking at the clock, it was already past 1:00.
"If Tenchi-niichan... if Tenchi-niichan disappears, it will be Sasami's fault."
Thinking this, tears spilled from her large eyes.
"Oh, you must have been very scared. It's okay, it's okay. Tell me slowly. That's right! You must be hungry, right? I'll order something for you."
While the auntie, still misunderstanding, busied herself making a phone call, Sasami and Ryo-Ohki quickly dashed out.
"Tenchi-niichan, wait for me!"
"Meow~!"
And after somehow reaching Nan-yoji (Meaka Fudo), they quickly set the device.
"There, that's it. We just barely made it, Ryo-chan."
"Meow~!" Ryo-Ohki was also overjoyed.
By the way, what about Kiyone? She was at a total loss as the girl clung to her in the temple grounds, crying "Mommy~, Mommy~."
"Ah, enough already, please give me a break! Besides, does your mommy look *that* much like me?"
Just then, a massive lump of flesh came stomping up the grounds, shaking the earth.
"Oh~, Mami-chan. There you were. Mommy was worried~."
The thing she thought was a lump of flesh was a middle-aged woman of extreme obesity. Yes, her hands and feet were like hams...
"Mommy~!!"

The girl called Mami pushed Kiyone aside and clung to the massive monster. It took Kiyone a full three minutes to regain her sanity, but she was Galaxy Police, prepared for emergencies. Overcoming the severe trial of the collapse of her maiden heart, she bravely headed toward Meguro Fudo.
Well done, Kiyone. Keep it up, Kiyone. Your future is bright! ...is it?
After realizing she had lost her map and searching for it in vain, Mihoshi finally reached Mekin Fudo by leaning on people she met along the way. Finding a monk who appeared to be the head priest cleaning in the temple grounds, she ran up to him.
"Excuse me~. I heard there's a Mekin Fudo at this temple~."
"Ah, yes, it's in the back."
"Yay! I did it! Thank you very much!"
Mihoshi ran to the back, overjoyed, and successfully set the device. That was quite the good follow-through for Mihoshi.
But, are you expecting something? Because Mihoshi wasted so much time getting here, she didn't have time to be airheaded on-site like the others. Don't worry... but having said that, it's fine! Mihoshi-oneesama will never let you down. She will definitely do something... look forward to it.
Meanwhile, Achika and Nobuyuki were on the observation deck in a romantic mood.
"Wow, it's amazing. Look, look, the people and cars look so small!"
"Yeah. It's like a lie that you and I were able to meet among so many people."
"Nobuyuki-kun!"
"Achika-chan!"
Before they knew it, Nobuyuki had started calling her "Achika-chan" instead of "Achika-kun."
Things are going well, aren't they?
The young couple looking into each other's eyes had nothing to fear... or so it should have been. The world doesn't work that easily.
"Achika-chan, go stand by that window over there. I'm going to take 8mm footage."
Achika went to the window as told and struck a pose.
The next moment, Nobuyuki, looking through the camera, made a strange face. Then, he took his eye away from the viewfinder and looked at Achika with a vacant gaze. His face was turned toward her, but his focus was through Achika and out the window. Achika was drawn to look as well.
The sky, which had been so clear until just moments ago, suddenly started to cloud over. Black clouds flowed in rapidly, like flowing ink, gradually forming a swirl like the eye of a typhoon. It looked exactly like a strange, eerie eye, staring

intently at the two of them. Looking closely, strangely, those clouds were forming only above Tokyo Tower.
Achika shuddered with a fear she had never felt before. A sense of dread and anxiety, not knowing where it was rising from, dominated her.
"Ah, man, I was hoping to take a masterpiece at Tokyo Tower... now that the sky has become so dark..."
Nobuyuki still couldn't even imagine what was about to happen. Not realizing the gravity of the situation, Nobuyuki sighed leisurely. "Still, this cloud is strange, isn't it!?"
Nobuyuki looked back and forth between the sky, which had grown even darker and more ominous, and Achika, who was standing frozen with a stiff face. With the gradually rising tension, Nobuyuki finally realized something was wrong. The surrounding classmates and general visitors were starting to get rowdy.
What threw everyone into a panic was the next moment.
"Kyaaa!"
"W-what is that!?"
A face like a Noh mask emerged in the center of the swirl. The people on the observation deck started running toward the elevators, every man for himself.
Achika and Nobuyuki also tried to join the crowd. Just then! Lightning struck, and thunder roared. For an instant, Tokyo Tower, wrapped in a flash of light, emerged like a phantom.
"Ugh."
Suddenly, Achika gripped her head and crouched down.
"What's wrong, Achika-chan!" Nobuyuki screamed, his face turning pale at Achika's unusual state.
"M-my head... it hurts like it's splitting... Ugh."
"Achika-chan, Achika-chan!!"
In the meantime, the swirl descended rapidly, approaching the tower. The elevator left without noticing the two, leaving them behind. No, leaving Tenchi and Saeba Hito behind, who had been secretly following and watching over them.
"Flash!!"
As if plasma had been discharged from the center of the swirl, a dazzling orb of light came dancing down. While holding her head, Achika stared at the orb as if mesmerized. Then, blue light burst from the orb and enveloped Achika.
"Kyaaaaaa!"
Achika's scream echoed through the observation deck. Then, she collapsed as if she were crumbling.
Tenchi, who had been desperately holding back while watching the situation, couldn't take it anymore and was about to jump out. But even faster than that!

Nobuyuki, who had been helpless in the face of the approaching orb, threw himself over the unconscious Achika to protect her.
"It's finally time for him to show himself."
Washu braced herself in front of the remote control switch for the "Spirit Wave Barrier Generator."
"Here we go, everyone!"
"Got it."
"Yes!"
"Yaaay!"
"Meow!"
The tense voices of Ryoko, Ayeka, Mihoshi, Kiyone, Sasami, and Ryo-Ohki came back from the communicators one after another.
"Now, please work! Spirit Wave Barrier Generator, activate!!"
Washu pressed the switch button.
At that instant, five-colored lights were supposed to rise from the five points in Tokyo toward the sky... but.
Hey, what's wrong???
Everything was silent, showing no reaction.
"This is strange, it's not working! This shouldn't be..."
Washu shook the remote switch violently.
"Washu, what is the meaning of this!"
"Washu-san!"
"Washu-oneechan!"
"Meow-meow!"
The anxious voices of everyone streamed from the communicator.
"J-just wait a second. There's no way there's a mistake in my calculations..."
Washu regained her composure and began checking the checkpoints.
"Hey, are we still not there yet!"
"Washu-san, please hurry!"
The irritation of everyone could be heard.
"...Geez, you're annoying! Let's see... Meaka Fudo is OK. Mejiro Fudo is also OK. Meao Fudo, this is also OK. Meguro Fudo OK. And, Mekin Fudo... Oh? Mihoshi-dono, did you set it properly?"
"Yes, I'm doing it!" Mihoshi's energetic voice came back from the communicator.
"This is strange... Ah!" Realizing something, Washu continued. "Mihoshi-dono, you went there after looking at the map properly, didn't you? About the location of Mekin Fudo... is it the place I specified? There are two locations for Mekin Fudo!"
"Eh~? Two locations~!!"
At Mihoshi's bizarre scream, Washu clutched her head.

"Yes, two locations! It won't function unless it's the place I specified. That's why I sent you the map!"
"But I lost the map, and I was asking around as hard as I could, but to think there were two places... *sniff*, *hic*, *hic*, *sob*."
As Mihoshi started crying, Kiyone called out. "It's no use crying now! Just go to the specified Mekin Fudo quickly!"
At Kiyone's voice, Mihoshi sobbed even harder. "I-it's my fault, Tenchi-san, Tenchi-san is... Waaaaa! Kiyone!!"
Just then, Sasami's voice came from the communicator.
"Mihoshi-san, it's still okay. Please calm down and go there."
"That's right, just as Sasami-chan said. I'll send the map there again. Just set it in the correct place as quickly as possible." Washu said as if soothing a child.
"Yes. *Sniff*."
Encouraged by Sasami's gentle words, Mihoshi finally pulled herself together and headed to the correct point. As promised, she did it, but this time, the airheadedness couldn't be laughed off.
"Achika-chan, stay with me! Achika-chan!"
Nobuyuki lifted the unconscious Achika and laid her on the rows of chairs.
The orb of light was still closing in. That was when a man jumped out in front of Achika and Nobuyuki. It was the GP officer, Saeba Hito. Saeba Hito aimed his rifle at the orb. The window glass shattered due to the powerful pressure from the orb, which had descended to face them directly through the glass. However, Saeba Hito didn't flinch, aimed his rifle, and fired a high-capacity beam at the orb.
The sphere under attack expanded rapidly while emitting plasma, and like it was bursting, it began to incorporate the surroundings into another world. It was a sub-space where auroras shone.
Before long, several points of light converged and began to take the form of a person. And when the dazzling light faded, a human figure appeared, dragging a long, long cloak with an eerie Noh-mask face. And at the same time, the sub-space vanished. Looking closely, the black cloak the monster was wearing was something like a mist.
"Kain... so you've appeared!"
Saeba Hito reset his rifle and glared at the eerie monster. However, Kain stood calmly, and his Noh-mask face smiled ominously.
"Kukukuku, a survivor of the Galaxy Police. I'll give you credit for the guts to follow me this far. But this is the end..."
Kain held up his right hand, and strong plasma was unleashed from his fingertips toward Saeba Hito.

"Gwaaaaaa..."
Writhed in agony, Saeba Hito collapsed.
"Guh... K-Kain... I will... be the one to..."
Looking down at him, the monster wore a smile as cold as ice.
"Kuku, you fool... you should regret defying my power."
When Kain spread his cloak of black mist, blue plasma assaulted Saeba Hito from it.
"Gyaaa!!"
What a thing! Saeba Hito, wrapped in blue light, was sucked into the sub-space created inside Kain's cloak.
"Saeba-san!!"
Tenchi reflexively jumped out.
"It's dangerous! Don't come!"
At the voice of Nobuyuki, who shouted toward the boy who had appeared from nowhere, Achika regained consciousness.
"Ugh, Nobuyuki-kun?"
"Achika-chan, Achika-chan!! Can you understand me!?"
Achika looked at Nobuyuki with eyes that were starting to see vaguely.
"Nobuyuki-kun, w-where is this?"
"Observation deck... Tokyo Tower's observation deck."
"Tokyo Tower... Observation deck... Ugh!"
Pain struck again.
"Are you alright, Achika-chan!"
"...It's scary!"
Achika clung to Nobuyuki's arm. Nobuyuki, while bewildered, held Achika firmly.
Nobuyuki was curious about the boy from earlier and turned around. Achika also turned her gaze that way. The boy was bravely confronting the monster.
That child is...
Achika felt her chest tighten with a strange emotion.
Tenchi pulled the "Tenchi Sword" from his waist and braced himself. Kain, as expected, welcomed the new enemy with an eerie laugh.
"Ho, you're the one appearing... Kukukuku, just right. I want to eradicate Jurai. I thought about doing that before you were born, but if it's come to this, I'll do it right here. Dieeee!"
Bashi bashi bashi!
The blue plasma that had been unleashed toward Saeba Hito earlier now assaulted Tenchi.
"Nuoooooo!"
Tenchi caught the plasma with the Tenchi Sword.

"Ho, kukukuku."
Kain laughed happily.
"I... will protect... my mother..."
Tenchi started to gradually push the plasma back.
"...That's quite some power... an amount of energy worth absorbing. Well then, how about this..."
Kain unleashed plasma even more intense than before. Even Tenchi couldn't hold it back this time. His body was gradually enveloped in blue light, turning into an orb of light. And finally, he started to be absorbed into Kain's dark cloak.
"Damn it, what's going on with this power..."
The moment he thought it was all over.
"Stop it!!"
At the same time as that voice, an impact ran through Tenchi's body.
"Ugh!"
Nobuyuki saw the blue flash burst. The boy who had been about to be swallowed by the monster's cloak fell to the floor in slow motion. He looked up at the source of that scream. It was Achika, who should have been clinging to him and trembling until now.
The moment Achika shook off Nobuyuki's arm and stood up straight, and thrust both hands forward, the scene he had witnessed just now had unfolded.
"W-what!?"
Even Kain seemed not to understand what had happened. Achika was standing there, thrusting both hands forward, emitting an aura from her entire body. Kain glared at Achika with eerie eyes.
"Kukukuku, so that's how it is. You are different from the ones until now... Hmph, it was worth it to come to such a frontier planet searching for you."
Kain walked toward Achika calmly.
"It's your power... the potential ability within you that is tormenting me."
Kain thrust his right hand toward Achika. Plasma started to collect at his index finger. Achika's eyes opened wide. Tenchi, who had fallen, raised his face and screamed.
"S-stop it... K-Kain!"
Around that time, Washu and the others were irritated, waiting anxiously for the contact from Mihoshi.
"This is bad... if this drags on any longer, it will become impossible to control."
Washu muttered, worried about the wavy lines of the time axis reflected on the monitor of the time-causality controller.
It was at that moment.
"T-this is Mihoshi~, *huff*, *huff*! I have just set the device at Mekin Fudo~!"

Mihoshi's voice flowed from the communicator.
"Yeah!!"
Cheers went up in unison.
"Alright, well done. Now everyone, I'm going to turn on the switch again."
Washu pressed the remote switch decisively.
This time, the "Spirit Wave Barrier Generator" started to activate, and its effects appeared immediately. The leaves of the trees all over Tokyo began to shake and dance into the sky. And lights rose toward the sky from the five points in the city. From Meaka Fudo, Mejiro Fudo, Meao Fudo, Meguro Fudo, and Mekin Fudo. The indescribably beautiful light emitted from each Fudo statue gathered toward Tokyo Tower. Before long, the entire tower was shielded in a cylindrical shape.
It was the very moment Kain had tried to bathe Achika in plasma. A rift was created by the shield, and Kain started to be swallowed into it.
"Guaaaaaa!"
Everyone thought they had done it.
But for only a moment, a terrible thing happened right after.
Kain had taken Achika with him.
"Kyaaaaa!"
Achika's scream echoed.
Tenchi mustered all his strength and stood up.
"Achika-chan!"
He felt like the boy had screamed something.
But Achika couldn't hear anything anymore.
The rift in space swallowed the two and began to close its mouth as if satisfied.
That was when!
"Achika-chan!"
Nobuyuki furiously chased after Achika and threw himself into the world of the abyss.
The next moment, releasing one final radiance, the rift in space vanished completely.
There was a man staring intently and endlessly at that final light shining in the distant eastern sky.
Yes, it was none other than Masaki Katsuhito, who was waiting for his daughter's return in a land far away from Tokyo.

Chapter 8:

Cosmic Era 507484... Kain Annihilation

"No way, something like this..."
Washu was left speechless by the gravity of the situation. At her words leaking from the communicator, Tenchi lost his usual composure.
"Washu-san, my mother—what's going to happen to my mother!"
"..."
Washu did not answer.
From the communicator, frantic voices broke out.
"What's going on? What happened, Tenchi!"
"Tenchi-sama! Is Achika-sama not safe!?"
"Tenchi-san!"
"Tenchi-niichan!"
"Tenchi-san!"
"Meow!"
After a moment of silence, Washu spoke heavily.
"Tenchi-dono's mother and Nobuyuki-dono have both been dragged into a different dimension."
Before Washu could finish her sentence, Ryoko shouted.
"What did you say! What is the meaning of this, Washu!"
"Is there no way to save my mother and the others!?"
Ayeka was also desperate.
"It's impossible... identifying the dimensional coordinates of that different space is nearly impossible. In other words, there is no way for us to get there from here..."
"How can this be...!?"
Tenchi was stunned. A sigh of despair escaped everyone.
"...Wait, but... no, that's too dangerous!"
At Washu's realization, Tenchi pleaded as if grasping at straws.
"What is it, Washu-san! If there is any way, please tell me. I... I will do anything to save my mother!!"
"Tenchi-dono..."
Washu was moved by Tenchi's devotion to his mother. She decided to risk both danger and breaking the law.

"I understand. Everyone, gather at Tokyo Tower where Tenchi-dono is. I will begin preparations in the meantime..."
Leaving them with that, Washu cut the transmission.
Meanwhile, Nobuyuki stood alone, dazed, in an endless space filled with blue light.
"Where is... this?"
Looking around, there was nothing. It was a purely blue world with no distinction between sky and ground. Nobuyuki mustered all his strength and screamed.
"Achika-chan! Achika-chan! Please, answer me!"
It was a hollow cry. What had happened? They had only come to Tokyo Tower for their school trip. Why had it come to this? He started walking with that thought in mind. He had no destination, but he couldn't just stand still. Nobuyuki walked silently, as if possessed. No, he had no other choice.
Elsewhere, Achika was held captive by Kain. Looking down at Achika, who remained unconscious from the shock of being swallowed into the different space, Kain wore an eerie smile.
"Kukukuku. Your life is now in my hands... If only you would just disappear..."
Kain spread his black cloak and prepared to unleash plasma at the unconscious Achika.
"Achika-chan!"
Just then, Nobuyuki, who had found the fallen Achika and the terrifying monster approaching her, came running up.
On the observation deck of Tokyo Tower, Tenchi, Ryoko, Ayeka, Sasami, Kiyone, Mihoshi, and Ryo-Ohki were gathered. Washu spoke from the monitor.
"If there is a one-in-ten-thousand chance of finding Tenchi-dono's mother and father, it is this: trace Tenchi-dono's brainwaves to his mother—Achika-dono's—and have Ryoko teleport to that point."
"Trace my mother's brainwaves with mine...!"
Tenchi murmured with an anxious expression.
"Yes. As her son, Tenchi-dono, you should be able to do it."
"Then let's chase after them immediately!" said Ayeka.
"W-wait a minute. Even if you locate them, you can't destroy Kain."
"Then what are we supposed to do!" Ryoko pounded the monitor impatiently.
"That's why we have to use the 'Dimensional Vibration Bomb,' despite the danger!"
At Washu's calm statement, Kiyone shouted in surprise.
"A... Dimensional Vibration Bomb? You must be joking, Washu-san. That has enough power to destroy a small galaxy, let alone a planet... Besides, we need authorization to use it!!"

"It’s an emergency, Kiyone-dono. I need you to turn a blind eye." Washu’s voice was more tense than ever.
"Even if you guys say you won't do it, I'll do it alone! I’m already a wanted criminal in the universe. I’m not going to get cold feet now over detonating a Dimensional Vibration Bomb or two!!" Ryoko declared flatly.
"I will do it too!" Ayeka followed suit. Even in times like this, the two were perfectly in sync. How reliable.
"Sasami, for Tenchi-niichan's sake, isn't afraid of the police!"
"Meow! Meow!!"
"Everyone... for my sake... thank you." Tenchi felt his eyes blur with tears.
"Well, since the opponent is who he is, we have to finish him here, or he might just crawl out of another different space later," Washu said, gaining momentum and winking.
"Kiyone~!" Mihoshi peered into Kiyone’s face.
"I get it, I get it... I know. Let's do it."
Mihoshi hugged Kiyone when she said that.
"That’s why I love you! Kiyone~!"
Do they really understand the situation? Questionable!!
Nobuyuki was throwing himself into a battle that seemed like it would never end. Trembling, he glared at Kain with all his might. Nobuyuki was the one who broke the deadlock. He raised his fists and leapt at the terrifying monster.
"Uwoooo!"
His fist hit Kain’s Noh-mask face. Or so he thought, but there was no impact. All there was, was the monster's eerie laughter.
"Kukukukuk."
"Ya!"
"Hahahahaha."
"Ei!"
"Wahahahaha."
No matter how many times he repeated it, it was the same. Eventually, the monster spoke as if he had had enough fun.
"Now, you must be tired. It’s time I let you rest."
He spread his black cloak again and unleashed pale blue plasma.
"Uwaaaa!"
Wrapped in plasma, Nobuyuki collapsed helplessly at Kain’s feet.
"A... Achi... ka-chan..."
Achika was in a deep sleep.
Tens of thousands of cherry blossom petals were scattering in confusion from the sky. Achika herself was the one walking through the blizzard of petals. They

landed on her head and shoulders, no matter how many times she brushed them away. Suddenly, the wind blew. The haze of flowers cleared, and something became visible in the distance. Straining her eyes, it appeared to be a house.
It was... a house she had seen somewhere before.
Achika thought, "Ah."
It was the "Dream House" she had seen in Nobuyuki's sketchbook. Achika instinctively smiled. Standing in front of the house she had been staring at with sparkling eyes was someone.
"No-bu-yu-ki-kun..."
It was indeed Nobuyuki, smiling gently. Achika ran toward him. Nobuyuki noticed her too and waved.
"Achika-cha~n..."
The voice came from far, far away.
"...Achika-chan..."
"U... n..."
Achika began to wake from her dark, deep sleep. With a still-dazed head, she looked around. Nobuyuki's face was right in front of her.
"Achika-chan..." Nobuyuki smiled weakly.
"Nobuyuki-kun... why..."
She noticed Nobuyuki lying there covered in wounds.
"Kukukuku, you woke up at a good time."
With that voice, everything at Tokyo Tower came rushing back. The devilish, eerie monster, Kain. Looking up at Kain, who was standing confidently before them, she screamed with all her hatred.
"You... it was you. I won't forgive you... I will never forgive you!"
In the fury that blew out like flames fanned by the wind, Achika felt that what she had feared had finally arrived. The terror she had felt that evening, glancing back at the boy, was a fear of her own power. The power of Jurai that she—or Katsuhito—had sealed away for the sake of the peaceful days she lived on Earth. But now, even that fear could not stop her. Achika's body, standing against Kain, was wrapped in a dazzling light.
"Here I come!"
Achika unleashed a fierce shockwave toward Kain. But Kain caught it with his black cloak and returned it directly at her.
"Ah!"
Taking the full force of her own power, Achika was slammed to the ground. Kain loomed over the fallen Achika. His black cloak spread further, attempting to absorb her. But Achika mustered her remaining strength and unleashed another shockwave. Kain, caught off guard, flinched for an instant.

That was when a sharp shock ran through Achika’s body. Even more intense memories came rushing back. A small child sleeping peacefully in her mother's arms. Three generations of men offering white lilies in front of a tombstone on a hill overlooking the town. Fragments of many memories flashed before her eyes. Among them, the one that pulled at Achika’s heart most strongly and made her tremble was the scene that appeared repeatedly in her dreams, making her cry for no reason. A young boy standing in falling snow, sobbing. The boy’s face overlapped for an instant with the face of the boy she had seen at the school gate.
The words the boy had been sobbing became clear now.
"Tenchi!"
"M... ther!"
"Mother!"
...Tenchi!?...
A name she hadn't heard before, yet felt nostalgic, flashed through Achika’s mind.
Tenchi. Tenchi. Tenchi. Ah...
As Kain recovered and moved to attack the confused Achika, the next moment!
"Wait!!"
Tenchi and the others, who had traced Achika’s brainwaves, appeared in this different space. Tenchi broke in before Kain could attack her.
"I will be your opponent!"
"Tenchi!?"
As Achika screamed, trying to stop him, someone grabbed her shoulder.
"You are...!?"
"We made it just in time."
Achika turned around in surprise, and Ryoko winked at her, pointing to Ayeka behind her.
"Ayeka-san... you all are..."
Ayeka was helping Nobuyuki up. And beside them, Miss Mihoshi and the tour guide, Kiyone-san, were setting up some kind of device.
"Everyone!?"
"Prep complete! Hurry!!" Kiyone shouted.
Tenchi, who had moved to stand between Kain and the two who were about to be attacked, brandished his sword and said, "Quickly, save my mother!"
Washu’s words remained in his ears: *Listen, I will weaken the shield of the Spirit Wave Barrier Generator for only three minutes, so settle it in that time.*
"Now, quickly!"

Ayeka escaped through the rift in space that had opened up, carrying Nobuyuki first. Kiyone shouted while operating the buttons on the control panel.
"Energy level at maximum! Countdown start!"
The Dimensional Vibration Bomb activated, and the countdown began.
"Let's go, Mihoshi!"
"Yes!"
Mihoshi and Kiyone ran toward the space rift. The space began to fade away gradually. A storm of plasma erupted around Kain.
"Uwaah!"
Caught in the shock, Tenchi was blown away. His sword slipped from his hand. Ryoko, who had been trying to rescue Achika and escape, noticed Tenchi's danger and tried to teleport.
"Uwaah!?"
But a massive storm of plasma blew Ryoko away as well.
"Hurry! We have no time left!" Ayeka's urgent voice came from the other side of the space. The counter for the Dimensional Vibration Bomb continued to tick down at a dizzying pace.
"Tenchi-sama!" Ayeka screamed. Tenchi was unconscious.
"We're out of time!" Kiyone was desperate too.
Achika noticed that the sword Tenchi had dropped was at her feet. She picked it up, gripped it tightly, and a brilliant blade of light appeared. Her dignified figure as she brandished the sword was the very image of a direct princess of Jurai.
"Amazing! As expected of Tenchi's mother... but the opponent is too much. Achika, pull back!"
By the time Ryoko shouted that, Achika was already about to thrust the sword toward Kain.
"Ryoko-san, please... take Tenchi... quickly... please."
As soon as she said that, she swung the Tenchi Sword down with all her might toward the approaching Kain. This must have been the power Kain had feared.
"Gyaaaaaaaa!"
The tip of the sword shattered Kain's Noh mask in a single blow. Kain screamed and writhed in agony.
"Hurry!!"
At Ryoko's call while she held Tenchi, Achika ran toward the rift.
"G-Gwooooo!"
Even while suffering, Kain closed in. Just before the black shadow could reach her, Achika dived into the rift. At the same time, the rift closed.
A moment later, the counter for the Dimensional Vibration Bomb hit zero.

With a flash, the bomb exploded. Cracks ran through the entire space, and like a shattered mirror, the different space crumbled into pieces. For a moment, the Noh-mask face of Kain seemed to emerge in the final flash before vanishing into the darkness, but Tenchi and the others would never know that.
The bus terminal in front of Tokyo Tower was bathed in bright sunlight, as if the cloudy weather from earlier had been a lie. The students, having finished the final observation of their trip, returned to the bus noisily.
"And the child?"
Achika asked worriedly, and Kiyone answered, "We gave him first aid and he's resting. He'll be fine. He'll regain consciousness soon."
"I see. Thank you."
As Achika looked reluctant to leave, Washu, who had come to the past along with the disappearance of Kain, spoke up.
"Achika-dono. Now that Kain is gone, all causality has returned to normal. What happened this time is not something that should be remembered by anyone. I have already erased the memories of everyone except you. Of course, Nobuyuki-dono's wounds and all traces of them as well. And, I must erase your memories too."
"Yes... I will live with Nobuyuki-kun... that is enough."
"I see." Washu smiled faintly.
"Are you leaving already?" Achika asked, looking at the faces of Ryoko, Ayeka, Mihoshi, Kiyone, Sasami, and Ryo-Ohki. Everyone nodded sadly, yet firmly.
"Get along well with the old man—no, with Nobuyuki," Ryoko said in her usual tone.
"Yes... Goodbye. It was fun that you all came. But, we won't meet again, will we... Take care of Tenchi... that child."
Achika cut off her sentence there and added as if she had made up her mind.
"It seems I won't be able to be by his side when that child has the hardest time."
"Achika-dono!" Washu shouted, as if to rebuke her, but softly.
Everyone just stared at Achika's well-defined lips. Achika smiled slightly and continued.
"When I awakened to the power of Jurai, I saw the future. But it's okay, I'm not afraid. I have Nobuyuki-kun. And I will give birth to Tenchi, who carries Nobuyuki-kun's blood..."
"I'd like to let you meet Tenchi-dono, but there is a danger of a time paradox." Washu said calmly.
"Yes, I understand."
"Achika-chan!" Nobuyuki's voice calling Achika could be heard from inside the bus.

"We must go now."
Washu stared at Achika's profile, sad but resolute, and then erased Achika's memories.
"So long."
"Take care."
"Goodbye."
"Goodbye, *sniff*."
Each of them said their final farewells to Achika.
The Sparrow Sightseeing Bus, leaving Tokyo Tower behind and carrying many sparrows and memories, arrived at Tokyo Station. The group boarded the Hikari Shinkansen as scheduled and began their journey back to their nostalgic hometown.
"Ah, I'm tired."
"Hey, hey, what souvenirs did you buy?"
"Are we really going home already? It feels kind of lonely."
Amidst the noisy, boisterous classmates, Achika stared vacantly out the window.
"Achika-chan, are you tired?"
Nobuyuki looked at Achika worriedly in the seat next to her.
"For some reason, I feel so tired, as if I had a strange dream. Are you really okay?"
"Yes. Hey, Nobuyuki-kun, you know that house drawing you showed me once?"
"Yeah."
"I really hope that one day, we can live in a house like that together."
"Eh? Ah... yeah."
Though flustered and blushing bright red, Nobuyuki nodded vigorously. At that moment, another big dream was added to Nobuyuki's Dream House: making Achika, who was sitting next to him, a resident of that house.
As they watched the bustling streets of Tokyo go by, they shared the same dream. However, at that time, it was beyond either of them to think that such a dream would ever become reality. They still had many hurdles in life to overcome, such as continuing their education and finding employment.
The bitter yet fun days of youth would continue for a while longer.
Quietly, the veil of night began to descend on the bustling metropolis as it turned to dusk, as if to hide the joys and sorrows of the people.
Before long, the tail lamps of the Hikari express heading west vanished smoothly into the beyond of the darkness.

Epilogue

"Honestly, you put on this lady-like act most of the time, but you're so petty."
"What did you say! It's only because you were trying to eat all the *momiji-manju* that Father went out of his way to buy for us on his business trip to Hiroshima."
"Good grief, 'Father' again. Don't call him that so easily. Even the old man—and Tenchi, for that matter—find it annoying."
"My, and when did they ever say it was annoying? Besides, what is wrong with calling a dear person by a title filled with affection?"
"Nobody wants to be 'dear' to you."
The usual low-level bickering could be heard. Ironically, the presence of such exchanges was proof of a peaceful household.
Spring 1996, in full bloom.
The Masaki household, wrapped in soft spring light, was far too noisy to be called tranquil, but it was the same old Masaki house. Escaping the clamor of the living room, Tenchi stood alone on the veranda, remembering the image of his mother he had seen last in 1970.
The sight of his mother, who had shone so brightly among the throng of people at Tokyo Station, returning from her school trip. It must have been Washu-san's kindness that kept him from meeting her at Tokyo Tower, letting them part without meeting while she was unconscious. Or perhaps it was a reflection of his mother's own strong will.
But Tenchi had been driven by an irresistible impulse. He knew he couldn't meet her or touch her. But now that he realized the high school girl he saw on film as a child was not a fictional character, but the very mother from his faint, early memories... he had wanted to burn the image of his mother from an era he never knew into his own eyes.
He had begged Washu-san to take him to Tokyo Station, with the promise that he would only peek from behind a pillar, just so he could see her looking vibrant and healthy before he returned to the modern day.
(She was so full of life... she shone so brightly...)
Why was she not here now? And just as those ominous words of Washu's threatened to resurface, Nobuyuki came to Tenchi's side.
"Hey, Tenchi. What's the matter, standing here all alone..."
Tenchi was staring dizzily at the sunlight filtering through the leaves of the elm tree in the garden.
"...Hey, Dad, do you think Mom was happy?"

Nobuyuki wasn't young enough to be flustered or turn bright red at Tenchi's sudden question. Or rather, who could truly understand Tenchi's feelings right now? Nobuyuki answered in his usual tone.

"Yeah. Of course, she was happy."

"Why?"

"Because, obviously, she got to marry someone as desirable as me!"

Tenchi felt an intense irritation at Nobuyuki, who was making a V-sign cheerfully.

"Forget it!" Tenchi said, jumping down from the veranda.

"Hmm. The heart of an adolescent boy is a difficult thing," Nobuyuki said, watching Tenchi's back. He stepped down into the garden himself and looked up at the Masaki house.

"...She was happy. It was only for a short time, but we lived together in this Dream House. Right, Achika...?"

Nobuyuki remembered the words Achika had said on the way back from their school trip 26 years ago.

"Nobuyuki-kun, wouldn't it be nice if we could live in a house like that together someday?"

Above the house, a single white cloud floated idly.

Bounding out from the veranda, Tenchi ran straight up to the hill where his mother slept. On a clear day like today, he could see for miles. Looking down, he saw fresh white lilies swaying in front of the tombstone.

"...Dad!?"

Every year on the anniversary of her death, his father would say while offering more white lilies than he could carry: *"Your mother just loved these white lilies."*

His father must come here alone from time to time. He felt he could finally see a little of his father's true heart.

Perhaps Dad became such a cheerful person because of Mom.

Thinking of his father earlier, he felt embarrassed by his own attitude.

But there was one thing that kept irritating Tenchi's heart. It was a casual remark Washu had made: *"The Jurai Emperor who sealed Kain died young because of that battle."*

Could it be that Mom also died young because of that battle? If so, then I—I killed her! I was just acting tough, saying I would protect her.

Tears streamed endlessly down Tenchi's cheeks.

Rustle.

At the sound of the bushes shaking, Tenchi hurriedly wiped his tears with the back of his hand.

"Tenchi-dono!"

It was Washu who pushed through the grass.

"What's wrong, all by yourself? Hmm, let me guess. It's about your mother, right?"
Having been hit squarely, Tenchi finally tried to ask Washu the question he had been too afraid to voice.
"Washu-san, I..."
"You're an idiot."
Sensing Tenchi's feelings as he stared at her with earnest eyes, Washu said:
"If Tenchi-dono hadn't gone to the past, your mother wouldn't have been saved. Even if your mother passed away early because she saved you, if you hadn't gone to the past, she would have died 26 years ago anyway—it's the same thing."
"But I only went to the past just recently!" Tenchi argued, pointing out the contradiction.
Unfazed, Washu continued:
"Exactly. Tenchi-dono, time is not something that is always stable in every era. People tend to think the past is set in stone, but just as the future is fluid, the past also changes day by day. In other words, even as we speak, this era we are in is changing moment by moment due to the influence of the past. Do you understand? So, even if the battle is why your mother died young, that was just one trigger. Perhaps, somewhere down the line, the past will fluctuate, and she might not die because of that battle at all."
"Washu-san!" Tenchi raised his voice suddenly.
"Does that mean... depending on how the past turns out, there is a possibility that Mom is still alive in this era right now?"
"Eh?"
Even the genius scientist Washu-chan was surprised by the sudden development, but after thinking for a while, she replied:
"Well, I suppose you couldn't say that's absolutely impossible."
"I see, that's it! Yes!! All right, I'm going to change the past!!"
While Washu watched Tenchi running toward the house, cheering, she shouted in a panic, taken aback.
"Wait a second! Changing the past isn't that simple. Do you have any idea how much trouble I went through behind the scenes for this affair... Honestly, Tenchi-dono—!!"
Watching Tenchi run off with a hop in his step, seemingly unable to hear her, Washu gave a bitter smile.
"...Honestly. Men are all such mama's boys."
Before she knew it, Katsuhito stood behind Washu, looking up at the sky.
"Under this vast sky, there is a world... where Achika is living happily."

The spring breeze rustling through the treetops seemed to listen quietly to their words. The distant mountains looked slightly hazy. The scheduled train passed through the mountain gap, traveling toward the next town.

If one looks at the Masaki house, a strangely bright and noisy family(?) is making a fuss again over something trivial. Katsuhito, Nobuyuki, and Tenchi are living their lives now, loving this familiar scene. And the heart of Achika, who loved those three more than anyone else, will continue to live on forever in each of their chests, in its own way.

In Lieu of an Afterword: On "Tenchi Muyo!"

Taro Maki (Producer, Pioneer LDC)

Time: March 1991 (The height of the bubble economy)

Place: The president's office at the animation studio AIC (dirty, small, dilapidated)

Miura (Young president of AIC, businessman-type): "Maki-san, this has lots of girls in it, it’s an anime that is absolutely going to be a hit, so let’s do it. Come on, come on, come on."

Maki (Producer who doesn't understand anime): "Is that so, Miura-san?"

Miura: "It is. In this industry, this kind of thing is a staple—it's the royal road of anime."

Maki: "Hmm. More than that, isn't this title, *Tenchi Muyo*, weird?"

Miura: "That’s just a placeholder. A placeholder. Anyway, *Tenchi Muyo* means it's okay whether it's from the top or the bottom, so it's a good luck charm." (He still says this to this day.)

Maki: "!? Well, if it’s a good luck charm, I have no choice. Let’s do it, let’s do it."

Miura: "By the way, how about this project called *Moldiver*..."

Thus, the *Tenchi Muyo! Ryo-Ohki* project began. In the last scene of episode one, Tenchi’s clapping of hands overlapped with Maki’s regret for starting a project with such a casual conversation, and he found himself clapping his own heart in response. (Why didn't Miura come to the premiere?)

Time: Spring 1994 (Eve of being invincible)

Place: A hotel bar in Beverly Hills (Because, after all, it's America)

Maki: "Miura! (already on a first-name basis) We’re doing TV! TV!"

Miura: "When was that decided?"

Maki: "I just thought of it now."

Miura: "!?!"

Thus, the TV series began. To think we would end up challenging *Sazae-san*, the *Mito Komon* of the TV world...

Time: Winter 1994 (Invincible status)

Place: AIC President's office (Newly built with *Tenchi Muyo* royalties. Clean, spacious, gorgeous, looks like a soapland waiting room.)

Maki (Producer who will handle anything anime): "Let’s make a movie! A movie."

Miura (Producer who loves Versace, middle-aged businessman): "I knew you'd say that."

Maki: "It'll be a love story. Let's make it a tearjerker. A movie-like movie with a grand scale. We'll make it the culmination of *Tenchi Muyo*, where the mysteries uncovered so far are resolved, only to call forth new ones. Let's do all the sound in Hollywood. We're going to make something incredible."

Miura: "I'll follow you to the ends of the earth. (Enka style)"

The long-awaited movie production started. The project that began as an original video rode the momentum of reaching the peak of a TV series, changing its stage like a *shusseuo* (a fish that changes its name as it grows).

Time: April 1996 (Is the bubble back?)

Place: The same old Pioneer LDC meeting room

Maki (In the middle of spring labor negotiations for a 10 million yen annual income): "*Tenchi Muyo* is immortal! We're going to make even more."

Miura (Received a year-end gift from Versace): "What are you saying again, old man?"

Maki: "I have the feeling we burned everything up in the movie, but it's not over yet. Let's use this movie as a springboard to expand the world of *Tenchi Muyo* even further! I felt a thrill when making the trailer."

Miura: "You really do love this, Maki-san. Should we go back to the origins and make an OVA?"

How much of that conversation is true and how much is a joke is left to your imagination. At any rate, *Tenchi Muyo!* gained the support of many fans, far exceeding our initial predictions. It started with video, then CD, novels, comics, books. Of course, we did events. It became a TV series. We've expanded into CD-ROMs and games on every platform (can you guess which platform is missing?). The total number of items bearing the title *Tenchi Muyo!* has already exceeded 12 million units.

Supported by such fan affection, in the spring of '96, *Tenchi Muyo!* finally appeared as a theatrical film. For us, who work in visual media, a movie is the ultimate dream. And the themes of this movie are "Love" and "Dreams." Did you enjoy it?

Writing an "afterword" like this makes me reflect on the path we've taken, and my heart is full of gratitude for the work and for all the fans. Thank you very, very much. Finally, I would like to thank all the concerned parties and my fellow production staff who have supported us thus far. The *Tenchi Muyo!* project is the result of the joint effort of so many people that I cannot list them individually. Please continue to support us in the future.